

# Commentary

Volume Seventy-seven, Number Six, June 1984

## Can the Democracies Survive?

Jean-François Revel

### The Media and the Middle East

Daniel Pipes

### The Decline and Fall of Islamic Jewry

Bernard Lewis

### "Julia" & Other Fictions by Lillian Hellman

Samuel McCracken

### In Coventry—A Memoir

Dan Jacobson

### Deficit Thinking

Melville J. Ulmer

### The Sunshine Girls

Joseph Epstein

### "Star Wars"—An Exchange

Robert Jastrow & Critics

#### BOOKS IN REVIEW

Paul Johnson/David Gress/Maurice Friedberg/Peter Shaw/Eric M. Breindel

# HOW TO INSURE THAT SEAT BELT USE WILL SAVE MORE LIVES.

START WITH \$10,000 WORTH OF INSURANCE FOR SEAT BELT USERS.

Seat belts help save lives. They can reduce both the incidence and severity of injuries sustained in automobile accidents.

Yet in the United States rarely more than 15 percent of the people on the road use seat belts. General Motors has been trying to find ways to improve that percentage. One way is to provide a significant incentive for people to wear their seat belts.

**Seat belt user insurance at no extra cost.** Every new GM car or light truck equipped with GM seat belts and delivered by a GM dealer in the U.S. comes with a certificate of seat belt user insurance for the driver and any passengers.

For one full year after the first registration of the vehicle, any permissive occupant wearing a seat belt will be insured for \$10,000 against sustaining fatal injuries in an accident. The protection is valid in any accident in the United States, its territories and possessions and Canada, as long as the seat belt or child restraint system involved is properly used.

**This one-year, \$10,000 coverage is being provided by MIC General**, a subsidiary of Motors Insurance Corporation—the insurance people from GM. If any vehicle owner should want to purchase comparable insurance beyond the first year, MIC General will also provide information about

**It's a new way of looking at seat belts.** So from now on GM will be referring to these insurance-covered systems as "Life Belts."

If people who never thought to buckle up seat belts think to buckle their GM Life Belts, this insurance program will pay off by saving lives.

**Buckle your ~~seat belt~~  
Life Belt**

GM seat belt user insurance could change the way people think about seat belts.

its availability, and about how much it might cost.

For years General Motors has been equipping its cars and light trucks with seat belt systems that are both comfortable to wear and easy to use. GM has made it company policy for GM employees in GM-owned vehicles to wear seat belts. And GM has promoted seat belt use to the general public in messages like this one.

GM is confident that seat belts help save driver and passenger lives in an accident. Confident enough to offer this \$10,000 insurance for every new GM car or light truck.

*This advertisement is part of our continuing effort to give customers useful information about their cars and trucks and the company that builds them.*



Chevrolet • Pontiac  
Oldsmobile • Buick  
Cadillac • GMC Truck

# Commentary

VOLUME 77 NUMBER SIX JUNE 1984

- Articles** 19 Can the Democracies Survive? *Jean-François Revel*  
29 The Media and the Middle East *Daniel Pipes*  
35 "Julia" & Other Fictions by Lillian Hellman *Samuel McCracken*  
44 The Decline and Fall of Islamic Jewry *Bernard Lewis*  
55 In Coventry—A Memoir *Dan Jacobson*
- Observations** 60 Deficit Thinking *Melville J. Ulmer*
- Fiction** 62 The Sunshine Girls *Joseph Epstein*
- Letters** 2 from Mark D. Schlageter, David C. Phillips, B.B. Stoller, B. Bruce-Briggs, R.H. Cunningham, Alan J. Saly, Richard L. Garwin, Joseph Forbes, Nicholas T. Sakell, Bruce McKinney, Robert Jastrow, L.H. Gann, Franz M. Oppenheimer, Jacob Katz, and others
- Books in Review** 68 The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, by Peter Gay *Paul Johnson*  
71 The March of Folly, by Barbara W. Tuchman *David Gress*  
74 The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars, by Ezra Mendelsohn; From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry, edited and translated by Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin *Maurice Friedberg*  
77 Why Are They Lying to Our Children?, by Herbert I. London *Peter Shaw*  
78 The Heyday of American Communism, by Harvey Klehr *Eric M. Breindel*

---

**Editor:** Norman Podhoretz  
**Executive Editor:** Neal Kozodoy  
**Managing Editor:** Marion Magid  
**Associate Editor:** Brenda Brown  
**Contributing Editors:** Robert Alter  
Milton Himmelfarb  
Walter Laqueur

**Comptroller:** Philip Shamis  
**Production Manager:** Bruce Lodi  
**Circulation Manager:** Helene Hansen

**Cover:** The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is \$3.00, \$30 a year; 3 years \$81; 5 years \$120—Add \$5.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Copyright © 1984 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, *Public Affairs Information Service*, *Index to Jewish Periodicals*, *ABC Pol Sci*, *Historical Abstracts*, and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

---

## A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

## AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Howard I. Friedman, *President*

## The Commentary Publication Committee

Donald M. Blinken, *Chairman*

Morris B. Abram  
Norman E. Alexander  
Theodore Ellenoff  
Edward E. Elson  
Richard C. Ernst  
Lawrence Goldmuntz  
Mark Goodson  
Robert H. Haines  
Lewis J. Laventhol  
Bess Myerson  
Robert L. Pelz  
Ned Pines  
Frederick P. Rose  
Richard Schifter  
Nanette Scofield  
Henry Sherman  
John Slawson  
Alan M. Stroock\*  
Laurence A. Tisch

\**Honorary Member*

## Letters from Readers

### "Star Wars"

#### Robert Jastrow & Critics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations and thanks to Robert Jastrow for "Reagan vs. the Scientists: Why the President Is Right about Missile Defense" [January]. What I find particularly worrisome about the current debate on nuclear weapons and deterrence is that it seems to have been preempted by those whose philosophy it is to placate the Soviet Union through American vulnerability. Because he argues that we *can* do something positive to insure our future liberty, Mr. Jastrow's article comes as a welcome reversal of this trend.

Technical problems—and there will be some—with a missile-defense system can be overcome with the same skill and determination which gave us the successful space program of the 60's; but technical objections are not the issue. Even a defensive system with a low level of confidence is preferable to none at all, because to whatever extent it *does* work it disrupts the "correlation-of-forces" calculation the Soviet Union works out when weighing the probability of success in a military action.

Philosophically, a missile-defense system would seem to be attractive simply because it is not aggressive. Such a system poses no threat to property or lives; a pacifist can embrace the concept with a clear conscience. Being essentially reactive, a defensive system destabilizes nothing but the aggressive intentions of others. It makes negotiations obsolete, and makes escape words like "verifiable" redundant.

A missile-defense system seems to me to be our best bet for living in the uncertain future. Thanks again to Robert Jastrow for so clearly articulating the "right" side of the debate.

MARK D. SCHLAGETER  
Sussex, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Events that have occurred since the publication of Robert Jastrow's article make it all the more compelling reading. Nearly a year be-

fore the article appeared in print, President Reagan offered one of the most profound strategic changes in our nation's recent history, perhaps since World War II. The subsequent commissioning of the Fletcher and Hoffman panels (on technologies and strategies, respectively), sounded a new beginning and provided a timely and accurate reflection of the public mood.

Early indications that some bureaucratic inertia would slow progress were hinted at by Dr. George Keyworth, presidential science adviser, who said in a speech last fall: "Until this event [the President's strategic-defense initiatives], I had never really appreciated how slowly our institutions accommodate to change—and that the pace of change in Washington can be positively glacial."

Still another indicator of the "glacial" movement of policy initiatives, despite the longstanding Soviet ballistic-missile threat, was the route the administration was forced to take in its Fiscal Year 1985 defense budget recommendations. Rather than recommend an accelerated development like the Manhattan Project, the administration had to steer a middle course to keep the President's initiatives alive within the bureaucracy . . . ; in addition, a modest funding level had to be submitted to Congress.

Again, even a comment about the initiatives had to be stricken from the President's State of the Union address so that during this election year he could be portrayed as a man concerned with arms control. Some key political advisers apparently felt that to do otherwise would detract from the President's image as a man of peace. . . .

The President's ideas are good ones whose time has finally come. I only hope that Congress increases his budget recommendations.

DAVID C. PHILLIPS  
Spring Valley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was amazed that after Robert Jastrow's splendid, informative ar-

ticle, "Why Strategic Superiority Matters" [March 1983], there was not even one letter commending him. I'm not fond of writing, but I was convinced that many others would acclaim the article. I was, therefore, surprised at the shallowness and ignorance of reader response [Letters from Readers, July 1983].

Now I would like to comment on "Reagan vs. the Scientists," which shows the wisdom Mr. Jastrow has acquired from so many years of involvement in this field. He gives us the information we need to protect our country from an enemy like the Soviet Union which has twice as many armaments as we have—or more. His warning that the Soviets might launch a preemptive attack to destroy America should be taken very seriously. From what I know about the Soviets, they will strike without warning when they are ready (remember what they did to the Korean airliner). . . .

I wish Mr. Jastrow would clear up one point, however. In his excellent rebuttal to the critics of his earlier article, he stated: "All military communications—land, sea, and air—are vulnerable to EMP, the Electromagnetic Pulse," which the Soviets can generate by exploding an H-bomb high above the U.S. Yet Mr. Jastrow does not mention EMP in his current article, though he does state that our military installations can be protected by the "technologies of the miniaturized computer." But if EMP would render such computers useless, how can such protection occur?

B. B. STOLLER  
Santa Cruz, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow's "Reagan vs. the Scientists" is unfortunately titled. It is not "the scientists" who oppose missile defense; it is, rather, a group of publicists with scientific educations who are presented as authorities by sympathetic journalists ("the media"). Such publicists rarely do any science; they administer, attend conferences, head programs on "technology and society," and the like. When "the scientists" address themselves to civic issues, they are rarely informed by scientific knowledge, theory, method, or standards.

Missile defense involves complex technical issues. Tens of thousands of men and women have been laboring for more than a generation on

the radars, the computers, the interceptors, and the directed-energy devices that are involved in missile defense. Only these people are qualified to estimate how well missile defense will work, but they have neither the time nor the inclination to scribble or to be interviewed, and they are subject to Byzantine rites of review and censorship, so they are not heard—nonetheless, they are the real scientists.

Missile defense raises difficult issues of global security that cannot be resolved by science because they rest on estimates of the behavior of the political leadership of nations, especially the United States and the Soviet Union. "The scientists" are entirely ignorant of the latter and have little more than inchoate contempt for the former; nonetheless, they speak with pretended authority and are cited as oracles.

Issues of global security are the province of strategy. But the real strategists are hedged about by the same bureaucratic and censorship restrictions that affect the missile scientists. So we hear little from

them, but much from those who *write* about strategy—i.e., "the strategists."

B. BRUCE-BRIGGS  
Croton-on-Hudson, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

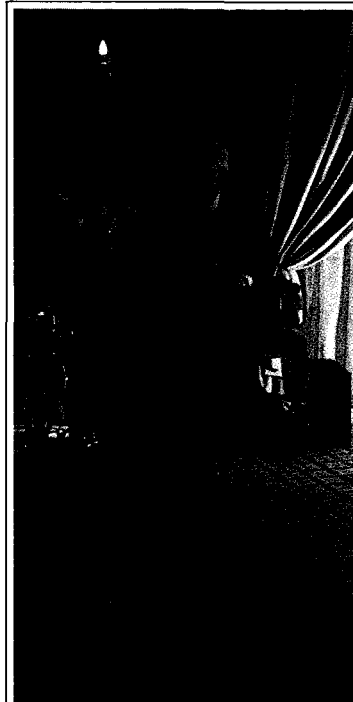
Robert Jastrow and COMMENTARY have provided a remarkable service in putting the nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union into an understandable perspective. I wish that Mr. Jastrow's article could be made required reading for the American Congress and European Parliaments. I hope his ideas and logic will soon become part of the common domain. This said, there is still the problem of how the world may be freed from the threat of nuclear war in the near future, that is in the next couple of years.

Since the Soviet bloc is ruled by a technocracy that cannot relax tensions to any significant degree without sacrificing pride of place (if not life itself), no relief can be expected from the Soviet hierarchy.

Nor is the free world likely to

RW017CE

*"The nation's capital  
now has a hotel for perfectionists.  
The Regent."*



Service which is discreet.  
But total.

A hotel modeled on  
traditional lines, yet  
boasting every modern  
convenience.

Understated elegance.  
Subdued tones.

Opulence. Flair.

Now, those who wished  
for such a hotel in the  
nation's capital need  
wait no longer.

*the*  
**Regent**  
WASHINGTON

A REGENT® INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

2350 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037

ALBUQUERQUE CHICAGO FIJI HONG KONG KUALA LUMPUR MANILA MELBOURNE NEW YORK PUERTO RICO SYDNEY WASHINGTON D.C.  
U.S.A. TOLL FREE 800-545-4000; WASHINGTON D.C. 202-429-0100, TELEX 904282 OR YOUR TRAVEL AGENT.

give up freedom, an idea so powerful it has been known to overshadow even such passions as love, greed, and politics.

Nor can we blow up the world to save it.

The facts and logic, therefore, suggest that the only practical solution lies in bringing to an end the despotic rule of the Soviet-bloc technocrats. The initiative for this, if war is to be avoided, clearly must come from the unhappy bloc residents themselves.

There are many Soviet-bloc émigrés who believe that such an eventuality is not only possible but feasible. Indeed, American national policy used to be based on the idea that an uprising in one of the Soviet satellites would lead to freedom throughout the bloc.

But the wrong "lesson" emerged from the debacle of the uprising in Hungary in 1956: a new doctrine... that we should encourage no new uprisings behind the Iron Curtain. If we were to do so, the new theory went, it would only visit undue misery on bloc residents.

But as the 1968 Prague Spring and Soviet dissidents and Poland's Solidarity continue to prove, great dissatisfaction and unhappiness remain the rule. Scratch any reasonably bright Iron Curtain refugee and he bleeds prodigious confusion over why the West, as Solzhenitsyn says, "has tremendously strong allies of which it makes no use—the people of the Soviet Union and indeed of the other subject nations."

R. H. CUNNINGHAM  
Pawleys Island, South Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The title of Robert Jastrow's article, "Reagan vs. the Scientists: Why the President Is Right about Missile Defense," gives Ronald Reagan more credit than he deserves. Mr. Jastrow never once mentions the media-hyped, but accurate, phrase, "Star Wars" technology, which, with its connotations of flashy, expensive weaponry, was what Reagan seemed to have in mind last spring and for which he was rightly attacked.

Mr. Jastrow's plan for a defense against nuclear missiles, by contrast, relies only partially on multibillion-dollar laser platforms floating in orbit around the earth. His discussion of the capabilities of smart missiles bearing conventional explosives and of the "keg-of-nails" anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) system is a constructive and valuable addition to the

debate on defenses against nuclear attack. His comments should be welcomed even by nuclear-freeze advocates, since these proposed systems allow us to give up our policy of holding cities hostage in a nuclear exchange and because the new systems themselves are non-nuclear in nature. But I did not hear the President discussing either of these new technologies.

If Mr. Jastrow... believes in the efficacy of an orbiting laser platform, he must still address the main contention of the critics, which is that such a space-based system would be a sitting duck for a missile fired from a high-altitude aircraft or for a hunter-killer satellite.

ALAN J. SALLY

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Robert Jastrow's article persuasive on the assumption that the antagonists are the United States and the Soviet Union. I would appreciate, however, having Mr. Jastrow's comments on how deterrence is affected by the stationing of Pershing-2 missiles in the NATO countries. Would not any sudden attack... against the United States be likely to cause the NATO nations to retaliate in their own self-interest? They must know that without the U.S. in the picture they would be likely to fall prey to the Soviet Union. Is the possibility of a NATO response an additional deterrent to a Soviet first strike? Also, would not the United States push the button as soon as it spotted Soviet ICBM's coming, instead of waiting for them to land?

SINCLAIR KOSOFF

Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow spreads an astonishing amount of misinformation about the history, status, and prospects for defense of the nation against nuclear weapons.

About President Reagan's proposal of a defense that could "intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reach our own soil," he quotes me as saying "It won't work." Since I have stubbornly advocated the development and deployment of ballistic-missile defense (BMD) to defend our missile silos, my negativism is hardly so sweeping as Mr. Jastrow implies. It is a judgment, instead, on the President's hope, with which the article ends, "... of rendering [nuclear] weapons impotent and obsolete."

That I say cannot be done. While we can effectively defend 1,000 Minuteman silos (or 5,000 Midgetman silos), we cannot prevent the destruction of our society by a few tens of weapons landing on our cities.

Nor can we imagine preventing the destruction of our two Trident bases by deploying "perhaps dozens of mini-missiles or more." Against four Trident submarines in port, each with 24 missiles, each carrying six or eight silo-killing warheads, the Soviets could well afford to use 600 of their own (no-accuracy-required) nuclear warheads, which could not be defeated by "dozens" of mini-missiles (and could surely penetrate any number of mini-missiles by well-established "ladder-down" techniques).

Mr. Jastrow has critics of the Reagan plan speaking "as if he [Reagan] were proposing a defense of entire cities and their populations, but he made no suggestion of that kind in his speech." What other meaning is there to the President's words?

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter Soviet attack; that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?

Or:

To achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles.

If the President and Mr. Jastrow are content with forcing the Soviet Union to expend twice as many nuclear warheads in a (successful) attempt to destroy U.S. ICBM's, then they should deploy buried nuclear weapons near the silos, as I have proposed publicly at least since 1976, or develop a non-nuclear SWARMJET shotgun-like defense of these silos. And we could help reduce the threat of nuclear war not by placing defensive arms in space and provoking the deployment there of Soviet defensive arms (additional killers of our own ICBM's), but by banning all weapons from space and all anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons and tests.

As for laser defense, when no "basic scientific obstacles stand in the way of success," there is the certainty of a Soviet search for counter-measures—space mines to destroy defensive satellites, missiles which

burn more rapidly within the protective shield of the atmosphere so that they cannot be threatened by technically successful X-ray lasers, hardening of missiles, and the like.

Almost every paragraph contains demonstrable errors. What experience or authority leads Mr. Jastrow to conclude that a warhead with "250-yard accuracy" will fall 99.9 percent of the time "within a mile of the target"? And "square acres"?

It was not "American arms-control experts [who] pressed the Soviets . . . to sign an agreement outlawing any large-scale defense against ballistic missiles." It was President Nixon who directed this effort, signed the 1972 ABM treaty, and led the fight for its Senate ratification.

It is *not* true that "The first Soviet ABM tests used a surface-to-air missile called the SA-5. . . ." The Soviet Union had long before 1972 deployed a real ABM system around Moscow (then and now easily defeated by U.S. strategic weapons) using the nuclear-armed "Galosh" interceptor, which has nothing to do with air defense.

The radar at Abalakova in the Soviet Union, as described last summer in the *New York Times*, in my opinion is an early-warning radar, which is clearly *banned* by the ABM treaty. If it is completed I have no doubt that it will constitute a violation of the ABM treaty. Although it would not augment Soviet ABM capabilities significantly, such a violation cannot be condoned. It will be of great interest to see whether the Soviets will scrap that radar before it is completed, as they have ceased other activities called to their attention in the Standing Consultative Commission set up by the 1972 SALT treaty—as have we.

To return to Mr. Jastrow: B-52's *can* "fly at high altitudes, which means that they can be picked up by a radar at a considerable distance," but in their strategic role they fly (like the B-1) at *low* altitudes, and both at subsonic speed.

It is *not* true that the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) is "as slow as a B-52"—Mach 0.75 versus Mach 0.53 at low altitude—and it is the ALCM on which we will rely for penetration of Soviet air defense, whether launched from outside Soviet territory by B-52 or B-1 aircraft.

Nor is our submerged strategic submarine force "very hard to reach by radio. . . . To receive a message,

the submarine must rise up to or just under the surface of the ocean." Our submarines cruise at comfortable depth, without leaving a surface wake, and are in constant receipt of orders and information. This is accomplished by towing a cable which floats on the surface or by towing a small buoy which swims a few yards below the surface. It is *not* true that "American submarines loaded with nuclear missiles must spend much of their time at sea incommunicado, cruising at depth." They do not talk *back* very often, to avoid detection, but they hear almost *all* the time. And if the normal broadcast means are destroyed in nuclear war, it is *not* true that "an airplane flies low over the water, trailing a wire several miles long." The TACAMO aircraft fly high and communicate with submarines thousands of miles away.

At the end of the article, Mr. Jastrow suggests that ultimately when the U.S. will be able to deliver ordinary explosives across continents with accuracies "measured in feet rather than in hundreds of yards, the military uses of the nuclear bomb will dwindle into nothingness." But even passive defenses of silos can protect them against perfectly accurate high-explosive charges. Most significantly, the availability of non-nuclear weapons will not eliminate the threat to the U.S. of Soviet destruction of our cities by nuclear weapons; although that is not a "military use," it is the one which bothers most of us. "Military uses" of U.S. nuclear weapons have been deterred by Soviet capability to destroy our nation and society, and no significant freedom for "military uses" of Soviet nuclear weapons exists either, so long as Soviet cities are vulnerable.

Mr. Jastrow states: "If nothing else deterred the Soviet leadership from an attack on the United States, that circumstance would certainly do so." "That circumstance" is our ability to destroy in retaliation "the 700 hardened leadership centers sheltering the Soviet elite." No and no! Who else is "certain" that a Soviet leadership (a Hitler?) willing to attack the United States in the sure knowledge of destruction of Soviet *society* would be unwilling if the leadership also were to die? But if one *were* certain, then why not the simpler step of improving the accuracy of the Trident-I missiles, as I proposed long ago, and reinforcing the communications to

strategic submarines to guarantee the receipt of the dread order to retaliate?

I have worked on most of the technologies mentioned in the article—missile guidance, mini-missiles, nuclear weapons, optical and X-ray lasers, strategic cruise missiles, strategic communications—and continue to do so. In my opinion, there is a technical consensus that society cannot be protected against the use of the present vast stores of nuclear weapons. Many who support a defense against ballistic missiles say that it cannot defend our society against Soviet forces but against nuclear weapons in the hands of an eventual dozen or more "crazy nations." But the threat from those nations is unlikely to be delivered by ballistic missiles.

Perhaps the President really meant to agree with the President's Commission on Strategic Forces (the Scowcroft commission), which reported, in late April 1983, its understanding that U.S. society *cannot* be made invulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack, so that our primary goal is to deter nuclear war and to reduce the likelihood of war by miscalculation. If so, it would be wise to emphasize now that the President was *not* "proposing a defense of entire cities and their populations." You could have fooled me!

RICHARD L. GARWIN  
Yorktown Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow once again voices his unrealistic, alarmist claim that the Soviet Union could easily wipe out our land-based missile force in a sudden super-Pearl Harbor attack and force our nation into surrender. Mr. Jastrow depends too much upon the vaunted report of the Scowcroft commission, which is not a sober and accurate appraisal of Soviet military capability but a biased, opinionated essay prepared by a group of superhawks in order to advance their interests. I have obtained a copy of the report . . . and, as far as I can see, it offers no substantiation for its conclusions. Indeed, hard evidence from our monitoring of Soviet missile tests indicates that Soviet ICBM's are frequently unreliable and inaccurate and thus could hardly execute the sort of precision strike that Mr. Jastrow fears.

There are less sinister reasons than the motive Mr. Jastrow ascribes to the Soviets—i.e., that they are preparing a preemptive counter-

force strike against our land-based missiles—to explain why they have placed such a large portion of their nuclear weapons into their land-based missiles and why they have considerably more nuclear weapons than they need for minimal deterrence.

The reasons for the Soviet emphasis on land-based missiles and for the large Soviet arsenal are simply that: (1) The Soviets do not now have nor have they ever had a credible intercontinental bomber force. (In his memoirs Nikita Khrushchev admitted that the Soviet jet and turboprop Bear and Bison bombers could not have been used against America. Khrushchev revealed that the Soviet leadership was delighted with the development of Soviet ICBM's, for it meant that the Soviet Union finally had a weapon that could be used to strike at the American heartland.) (2) The Soviets' submarine missile force is unreliable; Soviet submarines have to stay in port most of the time. (3) The military history of the Russians has been so tragic that they naturally feel they have to have large military forces. (4) The Soviet military-industrial complex is very powerful and has a vested bureaucratic interest in churning out and maintaining large quantities of weaponry. (5) The Soviets keenly understand—as we Americans unfortunately have never been able to—the political uses of military power.

Merely possessing nuclear forces beyond the bare minimum that, according to some ideas about deterrence, is required to dissuade the other side does not, as Mr. Jastrow believes, prove an intent to start a nuclear war. Many years ago the United States possessed several times more nuclear megatonnage than the Soviet Union, and many times more than would have been needed for bare "deterrence," yet there was no intent on our part to initiate a nuclear war.

The Soviet Union does not want a nuclear war with the United States. It may be true that the Soviet Union suffered huge casualties, well over 20 million killed, as well as extensive property damage during World War II. But . . . it would be quite wrong to conclude from this that the Soviet Union was not affected by all those losses, sufferings, and privations, and would not mind going through them again as a result of a nuclear war with the United States. Neither side wants war. . . .

The analogy with the start of World War I is often used to attempt to substantiate the claim that a nuclear war could suddenly erupt unintentionally. However, if we go beyond a superficial glance, we see that the analogy is not applicable to modern conditions. At the start of World War I, . . . none of the adversaries had the power to destroy their opponents; all they had were large land armies with conventional weapons. No nation had the power to obliterate any other and thus no nation was committing national suicide by going to war in August 1914. . . .

JOSEPH FORBES  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As Soviet missiles become more accurate and more numerous, our own missiles find themselves in greater danger. One response is to adopt the strategy of "launch on warning" as described by John Steinbruner in the January issue of *Scientific American*, an utterly appalling possibility. In contrast, moving into space seems a rational, humane, and beneficent alternative.

Robert Jastrow appears not to understand the concept of destabilization. The work in space to provide a defense against nuclear missiles is likely to be slow and uncertain. Even if we achieve a workable defense of some sort, deploying it will be subject to negotiations. All sorts of destabilizing weapons, like the MIRV and the MX, started life as bargaining chips, and space lasers should be no exception. Unfortunately, Mr. Jastrow does not discuss this at all, beyond remarking that failing to undertake the particular destabilizing action he advocates "seems contrary to common sense." . . .

A problem does exist, but Mr. Jastrow fails to address it. To put the matter very briefly: we cannot fight the Soviets without nuclear weapons, and as we become aware of the consequences of using nuclear weapons, we won't have the will to fight the Soviets with nuclear weapons. You'd have to be crazy to use nuclear weapons. So, in order to deter the Soviets, we either have to pretend to be crazy, or actually be crazy (neither alternative is very attractive), or we have to find a defense against incoming nuclear missiles.

Even looking for such a defense is a solution in the short term. Since the Scowcroft commission exhausted

the possibilities for any defense on earth (seeking an invulnerable basing mode for the MX, and concluding that none existed), the only place left to look is in the heavens. If we wish to continue to stand in opposition to the Soviet Union, Reagan's much derided "Star Wars" scenario is the only viable option.

But you couldn't tell it from Mr. Jastrow's article.

ALEXIS A. GILLILAND  
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As Robert Jastrow points out, the track record of scientists making predictions about the feasibility of bold new ideas abounds in examples of where they went wrong. A good measure of humility on their part is in order. So is credit. After all, many of those bold new ideas were generated and later implemented by the scientific community. But Mr. Jastrow's comment was meant to discredit totally, not to weigh judiciously. How else can he and Reagan (and presumably a few others) obtain credibility for their dangerous views in light of the "almost uniformly hostile" reaction from scientists, politicians, and journalists (a condition, by the way, not present in the examples of prophecy failure he offers)?

Giving such credibility to Mr. Jastrow would be difficult in any event after reading his article. Which is it? Can the Soviet Union destroy 70 to 75 percent of Minuteman missiles as stated in the body of the text or is it 57 percent as claimed in the footnote? Or is accuracy and/or consistency of no importance in either the writing about or firing of missiles?

Mr. Jastrow also seems to confuse prophecy with existing reality. Lasers are a bold if no longer new idea. To state, however, that "we already have the invention" and by implication can now, or in the short-term future, protect our cities against destruction is a disservice to rational discourse on the subject of defense. Most scientists . . . estimate that such a development, if possible, is quite a few years off—even as far off as 1989 or later when Trident 2 comes into use, which, according to Mr. Jastrow's logic, would make his laser scenario unnecessary. . . .

NICHOLAS T. SAKELL  
Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow's case for missile

defenses should be convincing to those who share his enthusiasm for the elimination of nuclear terror and a return to "the good old days" when large-scale conventional war was feasible. I would like to point out one major flaw in his argument and also question his basic goal.

Mr. Jastrow repeats the traditional argument that a successful Soviet first strike would leave the United States no choice but surrender or suicide. He claims that the Soviets would not only be able to destroy our missile silos but also our submarine and air bases and other non-nuclear military targets. This is a mistake. Our submarines and surviving bombers would have the accuracy to match attacks on anything except missile silos and hardened command posts. Trading military bases makes no more sense for the Soviets than trading cities.

In reality the Soviets would be limited to destroying 90 percent of our missile silos and accepting retaliation against their silos by the surviving 10 percent. We would be the losers, since our civilian casualties would be higher, but they would in no way be the winners. Each side would retain its conventional arsenal and enough missiles to threaten the cities of the other. We would have no incentive to surrender, which means they would have no incentive to launch the attack, except to prevent us from doing so.

Nevertheless, protecting our land-based system with smart missiles or lasers would eliminate the possibility of a first strike that would destroy the world's economic if not its ecological system. A simpler and less costly means to the same end is to get rid of our land-based missiles. They serve two purposes not better served by air- and sea-based warheads: they are accurate enough to threaten the Soviet Union with a first strike, and they provide bait for a first strike by the Soviets. To get rid of the latter, simply give up the former. The first requirement of a first strike is a target.

This radical solution would require a change in our European policy, enhanced survivability of our air-based delivery system, and better communications with our submarines. But with no possibility of a first strike, we would need far fewer warheads for deterrence—500 should be more than enough. Like Mr. Jastrow's solution, this one doesn't require Soviet cooperation, but in every other way its effects

would be the opposite. Instead of making conventional war feasible by making nuclear weapons obsolete, it would institutionalize nuclear terror and make its management easier.

This is the fundamental question: do we want to make "civilized" wars winnable (and losable) once again? Or do we want to accept and minimize the risk of nuclear annihilation in exchange for the conventional stalemate that has limited the superpowers to proxy wars for the last forty years?

BRUCE MCKINNEY  
Tacoma, Washington

ROBERT JASTROW writes:

First, a general comment on events in the year since the President's speech and the six months since the appearance of my article. Opposition to the idea of defending ourselves against Soviet missiles is still strong in the elite press and predictably among university scientists, but the basic good sense of the President's proposal is becoming increasingly clear to many other Americans. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said recently, "It's a matter of whether it's better to destroy people or to destroy weapons. The President has opted for trying to destroy weapons. . . ." I think no one could make the point more succinctly than that.

Regarding actual progress toward the President's goal: two study groups set up in response to the President's initiative, and directed by James C. Fletcher and Fred S. Hoffman, respectively, have completed their evaluations and reported to the Secretary of Defense that a ballistic-missile defense is technically feasible, largely because of new advances in electronics and computing which, in the words of the Fletcher report, "make it possible both to manage tens of thousands of engagements simultaneously [and] when coupled with precision sensors make it feasible to perform 'hit-to-kill' intercepts. . . ." The Hoffman report emphasizes near-term possibilities, also stressed in my article, which would use available technologies and a less than perfect defense, in the language of the report, to "reinforce or help maintain deterrence by denying the Soviets confidence in their ability to achieve the strategic objective of their contemplated attacks." This circumstance would enormously complicate Soviet planning for war, and add to the strength of our deterrent.

Opponents of the President's proposal are fond of saying, as Carl Sagan did recently, that "The obvious response of the Soviet Union is simply to build more ballistic missiles." But that comment is fatuous unless you specify the relative costs of defense and offense. If it costs the Soviets two dollars to overwhelm our defenses for every dollar we spend on them, then we have won; the Soviets may as well put away all their dreadful missiles, to paraphrase the President's statement, while we put away all of ours. In fact, for a point defense of our deterrent force with existing technologies, the cost variation is, as I noted in my article, at least 2:1 in our favor—that is, in favor of defense over offense. For the newly developing technologies of lasers and the space-based defense, which offer the promise of a direct protection of our population, it is too early to make a firm cost estimate, but I am told that preliminary estimates strongly favor the defense over the offense in this area as well.

Reference to lasers brings me to the question of what is actually being done to implement the President's proposal. Approximately \$25 billion, spread over the next five years, is now allotted for this purpose in the current planning of the Defense Department. This includes roughly \$6 billion for research on laser or "Star Wars" weapons and the same amount for the development of the defending mini-missile that steers itself into its target, known in the profession as a kinetic-energy or hit-to-kill weapon. The particular mini-missile described in my article was tested successfully by the Army in January at White Sands Missile Range, according to *Aviation Week and Space Technology*.

Regarding costs, the price of an effective point defense of our missile silos and other key sites is reported to be \$5 billion, and a three-layered "Star Wars" defense is estimated to require about \$100 billion. Some enemies of the President's proposal have mentioned trillion-dollar figures for an effective defense, but I have heard Dr. George Keyworth, the President's science adviser, describe those numbers as meaningless exaggerations.

Finally, there is a new awareness of the very rapid progress being made by the USSR in its own missile-defense program. While denouncing President Reagan's pro-

posal as "aggressive," the Soviets apparently have been pursuing identical objectives with enormous vigor. Both study groups were alarmed by the information presented to them on the Soviet missile-defense effort. The Hoffman report refers to "the increasingly ominous possibility of one-sided Soviet deployment" of a defense against ballistic missiles and reminds us that "the decision [to deploy] ballistic-missile defenses does not rest with the United States alone." The report by the Fletcher group states that the data available to them demonstrate that "the Soviets are already pursuing [ballistic-missile defense] at the fastest pace which their technology allows. . . . It is unlikely . . . that they could accelerate their effort more than they have, *whatever we do*" (emphasis added).

It is clear that criticisms of the President's proposal on the grounds that it will stimulate the Soviet Union to a countering effort are also meaningless. The Soviets already are working as hard as they can to get their own missile defense

ready for deployment. They will show us no mercy if they succeed before we do; Secretary Weinberger has said that the possibility that the Soviet Union would be the first country to develop an effective missile defense was one of the most frightening prospects he could imagine. I am sure that most Americans would agree with him.

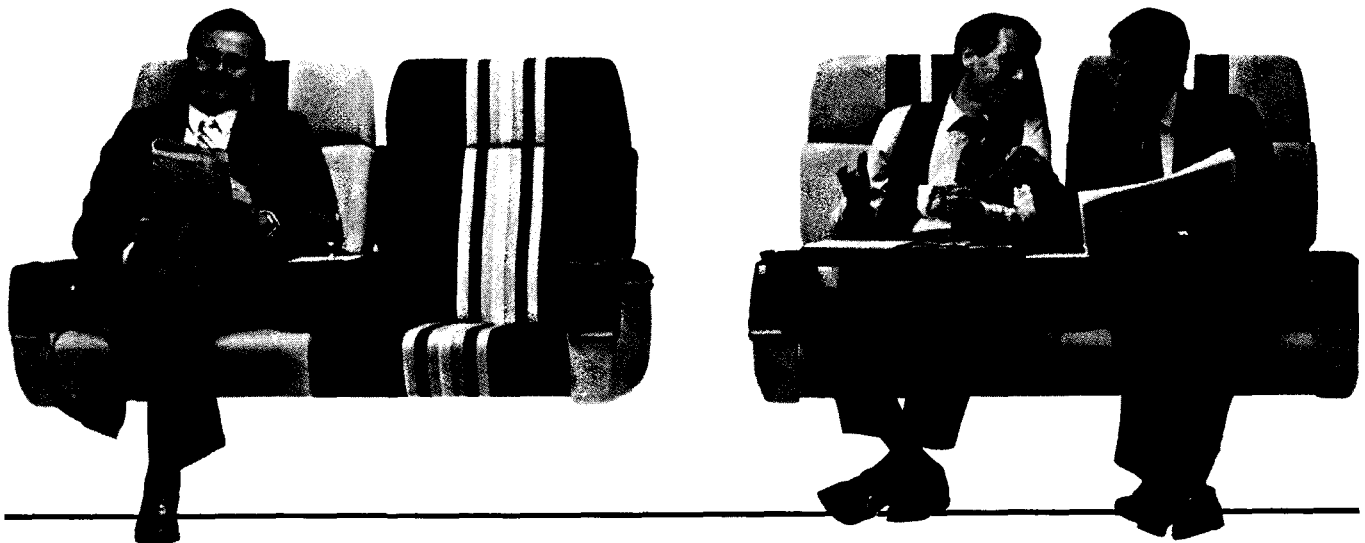
Now to the letters. Mark D. Schlageter expresses in a very elegant way what I and many others feel is the most important point of all, namely, that even a moderately effective missile defense complicates Soviet war-fighting calculations and discourages the Soviets from an attack. Carl Sagan, Richard L. Garwin, and their colleagues in the Union of Concerned Scientists are obsessed with the notion that only a perfect defense will protect us, and of course that is not achievable. But imagine the effect on Soviet planning of even a 50-percent-effective defense—and Secretary Weinberger has said that 50 percent is the level of effectiveness of our

existing missile-defense technology. Half the Soviet warheads would fail to destroy their targets, and the Soviets would not know beforehand which ones were going to be destroyed and which were not. They could not possibly plan an attack on the United States in these circumstances.

B. B. Stoller is rightly concerned about EMP or Electromagnetic Pulse, the surge of voltage produced over large areas by the high-altitude explosion of a nuclear weapon. But it is possible to harden or protect computers against EMP by shielding them in a metal cage. Communication lines can be protected by devices similar to those employed for protection against voltage surges caused by lightning. And metal cables can be replaced by fiber-optics cables. Glass does not pick up EMP. A substantial sum in the strategic-forces budget has been allotted to these measures. The problem is serious, but surmountable. The Defense Department is moving vigorously to meet it.

B. Bruce-Briggs raises a very in-

# TWA's 3 PAIR BEATS PAN AM



teresting question: for whom do the scientists speak, who oppose missile defense? Their conclusions on the feasibility of the new defense technologies are quite different from those of most professionals who actually work on these problems. It is quite unfair to say that these critics rarely do any science, as Mr. Bruce-Briggs suggests, because some are physicists of very great distinction. But I think it is quite true that most of those qualified by experience to estimate the effectiveness of missile defense "have neither the time nor the inclination to scribble or to be interviewed." On technical issues in the defense area, these professionals are the scientists whose opinion matters most. And I could not agree more with Mr. Bruce-Briggs regarding the ignorance and inadequacy of scientists when they make judgments on political behavior.

Alan J. Saly says that President Reagan had "Star Wars" and lasers in mind, and not the point defense I described. But if the President had lasers in mind, he could have

said so. A careful reading of his speech suggests that he wished to avoid fencing himself in by mentioning any particular technology. The events that followed support this interpretation because the budget submitted by the Defense Department calls for a balanced program, with equal attention given to "Star Wars" weapons and the kinetic-energy or keg-of-nails weapons.

Mr. Saly also asks how a missile-defense battle station placed in orbit could protect itself from such threats as the Soviet hunter-killer satellite. Several methods are available. One is passive—a hardening or armoring of the station; another is active—the destruction of a sensed threat by lasers or hit-to-kill weapons; a third is proliferation—the deployment of additional stations, concealed in orbit until needed. Designing the optimum combination of these methods is one of the main purposes of the five-year and \$25-billion research program just getting under way. Opponents of the President's program would like to have it believed

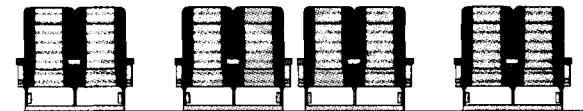
that laser battle stations and other space-based missile defenses are particularly vulnerable to a Soviet attack, but in fact they are no softer a target than our existing military assets in space, such as reconnaissance and early-warning satellites. All are vulnerable in their present unprotected state, but all will be protected in the time frame of the 1990's.

Sinclair Kossoff asks whether the possibility of a NATO response to an attack on the U.S. would be an additional deterrent to a Soviet first strike. As things are in Europe, it seems to me to be evident that the NATO nations would be paralyzed with fear of the Soviets in the event of such an attack, and anxious to stay out of the battle. Regarding the possibility that we might fire off our missiles in a launch-on-warning, merely on suspicion of a Soviet attack, one of the main purposes of President Reagan's missile-defense plan is to insure that no future President is ever faced with the necessity for making such an impossible decision. With a missile

# 's FULL HOUSE.



**TWA'S INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS CLASS HAS 6-SEATS ACROSS.  
PAN AM'S HAS 8.**



**WHO'S YOUR MONEY ON?**

For space and comfort across the Atlantic, the smart money's on TWA. Because TWA has 6-across seating. Pan Am and most others have eight. So on TWA, every seat is either an aisle seat or a window seat. That means there's never more than one person sitting next to you, so you'll have more room to work, and more room to relax.

And now you get comfortable 6-across seating on every widebody TWA flies overseas—our L-1011's as well as our 747's. That's because we've folded down the two middle seats and added more legroom in our L-1011's. So now, they're more comfortable than ever.

TWA's Ambassador Class®—it's the odds-on favorite to Europe and the Middle East.

**You're going to like us**



defense in place, you do not have to fire on the suspicion of an attack; you shoot the missiles down when you see them.

RICHARD L. GARWIN's letter alleges "misinformation" and "demonstrable errors." To take his points in order: it is true that we cannot prevent the destruction of American cities by Soviet bombs, but we can make that development considerably less likely by a defense of our military sites that introduces a large measure of uncertainty into Soviet planning and therefore discourages the Soviets from planning a nuclear attack. Mr. Garwin and some other scientists seem to think that the Soviets may explode nuclear weapons over our cities rather than, or in addition to, our military sites; but it is clear that they will never do this because it is the one act that is guaranteed to trigger a devastating American retaliatory attack against Soviet cities by our submarine-launched missiles.

Regarding the protection of our Trident submarine bases, the same circumstances that make these bases enormously valuable targets to the Soviets make them equally valuable to us. How concentrated a defense of such targets can we afford? Four Trident submarines are worth about \$8.8 billion, and the mini-missiles needed for a two-layered point defense, if turned out in quantity, should cost no more than \$1 million each. If dozens of mini-missiles will not do the trick, we can deploy hundreds or even thousands around each base and still have a highly cost-effective defense. We cannot be certain that the submarines will escape damage with such a defense, but the Soviets cannot be certain that they will be destroyed, and since knocking out all the Trident submarines in port is likely to be an important element in the Soviet attack plan, the uncertainty is more paralyzing on their side than on ours.

Regarding Soviet countermeasures to our ICBM defense, the Soviets may indeed search for these, as Mr. Garwin suggests, but implementing them will cost time, money, and payload weight. Space mines, a popular suggestion, are readily neutralized, according to the Fletcher report. Mr. Garwin also mentions Soviet measures to "harden" their ICBM's against the American lasers, by which he probably means spinning the ICBM to spread

out the laser energy over its surface, covering its metal skin with a coat of ablative material to absorb the laser energy, shining it up so that the laser beam will bounce off it harmlessly, and so on. At least, these are among the suggestions for a Soviet response that were offered by the Union of Concerned Scientists in a statement to which Mr. Garwin attached his name.

I am not an expert in this particular area, but I have talked with the experts enough to understand why most professionals—the "real" defense scientists described by Mr. Bruce-Briggs—regard the proposals of the Union of Concerned Scientists and Mr. Garwin as bordering on inanity. A spinning ICBM can be made vulnerable again by concentrating the laser light in a sharp pulse that catches the ICBM in one moment of its spin, so to speak. An ablative covering, spread over the entire ICBM, weighs a lot and reduces the missile's payload. If it reduces the ten warheads on the SS-18 ICBM to five warheads, the lethality of the most dangerous component of the Soviet ICBM force is cut in half. And a shine can be defeated by an X-ray laser, whose beam will penetrate the shiny surface without reflection.

Mr. Garwin suggests that the Soviet rockets can be constructed to burn out at low altitudes, where the air is so dense that our X-rays are blocked. The advantage to the Soviets in this is that if the rocket is no longer firing when it clears the atmosphere, it will be harder to detect and therefore to destroy. But there are limits to this ploy, because a rocket that gets going at full speed in the lower atmosphere will tend to melt as a result of friction with the air. Protection against this heat means shielding, extra weight, and, once again, reduced payload. The ICBM's accuracy is also reduced, probably by a factor of two or more. In terms of effectiveness against American missile silos, that is equivalent to about a tenfold reduction in the destructive power of the Soviet weapon.

Furthermore, an ICBM that has been rebuilt in this way is not just a small modification of existing Soviet missiles. It is a new missile, with completely redesigned engines and structure. This means that the existing Soviet ICBM menace—those 800-odd SS-17's, 18's, and 19's now sitting in Soviet silos, with their thousands of accurate and destructive warheads—has been ren-

dered obsolete. That would be a great accomplishment for American security.

But this is only a part of the story. When to the cost of these countermeasures in reduced payload, one adds the cost of surmounting the other obstacles that the ICBM or warhead will encounter on the way to its target, the residual effectiveness of the Soviet ICBM's may be reduced essentially to zero. For example, suppose an ICBM survives the heat of the laser beams focused on it at the start of its flight. Of course, it can only do this with the aid of countermeasures that will cost it heavily in payload weight and perhaps accuracy. At any rate, the ICBM survives, releases its warheads, and falls to the earth. The warheads continue on their way, and now, in mid-flight, they meet the second tier of American defense high above the earth. These defenses can be smart mini-missiles that home in on the warheads and destroy them by impact.

The countermeasures that preserved the ICBM from destruction by lasers will be valueless in protecting its warheads against these hit-to-kill mini-missiles. Other means are necessary. Suppose the Soviets use decoys—dummy warheads that distract the attention of the smart mini-missiles and allow the real warhead to slip through unscathed. In order for this to work well, the decoys must be cheap and lightweight, so that a whole flock of them can be released. The Fletcher report discusses this possibility, and points out that the American defense battle station will have instruments that take a jaundiced look at the oncoming warhead through eyes that can see visible and infrared light and possibly radar as well. Although it would be easy for the Soviets to construct a simple decoy that imitated the appearance of the real warhead as seen in one particular wavelength of light, such as the infrared, if the decoy had to be designed to fool our instruments in three different kinds of "light"—visible, infrared, and radar—it would have to have so much electronics and special equipment packed into it, according to the Fletcher report, that the decoy would weigh nearly as much as an actual warhead. But if the decoy weighs as much as a warhead, the Soviets cannot release a flock of them, and they are of little value.

The essence of the matter is that

none of the suggested countermeasures will work against a properly designed multi-layer defense, except at the price of a great reduction in the payload and effectiveness of the Soviet ICBM's. That is, of course, precisely the objective of the President's proposal—to neutralize the terrible menace of the Soviet arsenal.

The question of countermeasures is the most interesting raised by Mr. Garwin. Regarding the others: in estimating the 99.9-percent value for missile accuracy, I used a Gaussian distribution around the aiming point and made a liberal allowance for the uncertainties of an actual attack by trebling the 250-yard "circular error probable." As for "square acres," this phrase read "square yards" in the typed manuscript submitted to COMMENTARY, and the typo slipped through unnoticed. Smaller nits than that would be hard to pick.

Mr. Garwin is entirely wrong about the source of the pressure leading to the 1973 ABM treaty. The facts are fairly well known and very readably summarized by Henry Kissinger (*White House Years*, pp. 204-10; *Years of Upheaval*, p. 261). Kissinger writes that when Nixon came into office all his instincts were for continuing the ABM program he had inherited from Johnson. However, heavy opposition, as today, came from prominent scientists. Nixon insisted nonetheless on going ahead with an ABM defense, and the measure passed the Senate by one vote in 1969.

At that time the Soviets were also strongly opposed to a ban on missile defense. When Johnson brought up the idea of an ABM treaty at Glassboro in 1967, Kosygin said that it was the most absurd proposition he had ever heard. But after the Senate voted to build an American ABM defense, the Soviet Union suddenly became very keen on the idea of outlawing ABM. According to Kissinger, before the Senate vote the Soviet SALT negotiators wouldn't discuss an ABM treaty; after the vote, they wouldn't talk about anything else. Their own intense ABM effort in the years following the signing of the treaty demonstrates the cynicism and duplicity of their position. But that is another story. The point here is that Nixon was opposed to the idea of a treaty banning ABM's, and the pressure for the ban came from scientists and their allies in the arms-control community and the

Congress. Eventually, of course, Nixon gave in to the pressure for the treaty.

On the matter of Soviet ABM defenses, Mr. Garwin's remark shows he can be a careless reader. The context of the statement makes it clear that I was not reviewing the history of the Soviet ABM effort but only events after the signing of the ABM treaty with the United States in 1973.

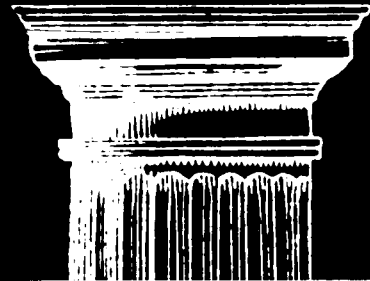
Continuing with the items in Mr. Garwin's letter, it is true that both the B-52 and the B-1 fly low as they penetrate Soviet airspace, but the remainder of Mr. Garwin's comment is entirely misleading. As I indicated in my article, the B-1 flies considerably lower than the B-52; its exact altitude is classified, but has been described as "tree-top level"—so low, in fact, that collisions with power lines are a hazard. In its run through Soviet airspace—the most important part of the flight—the B-1 also flies considerably faster than the B-52—Mach 0.85 versus Mach 0.55. Mr. Garwin must know these numbers, so it is hard to understand why he seeks to mislead the reader with half-truths.

Now for the cruise missile. Its speed is Mach 0.65—about 70 miles per hour faster than the low-altitude speed of the B-52, and 150 miles per hour slower than the top speed of the B-52. Both fly at the "slow speed of a commercial airliner," as my article notes, which is the essential point. The Soviet Foxhound fighter, which has the look-down, shoot-down capability needed to intercept a cruise missile, flies at a top speed of Mach 2.4 or 1,550 miles per hour. In Soviet tests, a Foxhound at an altitude of 20,000 feet successfully destroyed drone aircraft, imitating American cruise missiles, that were flying at 200 feet. These Soviet developments may explain why last year the Defense Department cut its order of air-launched cruise missiles from 4,348 down to 1,499.

As for submarine communications, a "comfortable depth" for Mr. Garwin is not a comfortable depth for submarine commanders, according to my sources. On TACAMO aircraft, I stand corrected.

JOSEPH FORBES has complained before (in the letters which appeared in July 1983 on my earlier article, "Why Strategic Superiority Matters," March 1983) about the statement that our ICBM's are vulnerable to a Soviet attack. This is the

# 1984 SUMMER SEMINARS IN JUDAIC STUDIES



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

## ACADEMY FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Offers

### A VACATION WITH A PURPOSE!

Enrich your mind • Delight your eyes  
Refresh your spirit

Co-Sponsored by

### Skidmore College

Saratoga Springs, NY

July 8 – 13

### Crisis and Change in Modern Jewish History

July 15 – 20

### Modern Jewish Literature: Contrast and Continuity

July 22 – 27

### Romantic Love in the Bible

### Williams College

Williamstown, MA

July 8 – 13

### Contemporary Jewish Ethics

July 15 – 20

### Biblical Narrative

Fee of \$300.00 covers room, meals  
and facilities.

Send coupon for additional information.

## ACADEMY FOR JEWISH STUDIES

165 East 56 Street • N.Y.C. 10022

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

or call

(212) 751-4000, Ex. 442, 434

judgment of General John W. Vessey, Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who estimates that only 25 to 30 percent of American ICBM's can survive a preemptive attack by the USSR. Contrary to Mr. Forbes's statement, this is also the clear judgment of the Scowcroft commission, which reported that the Soviets "probably possess the necessary combination of ICBM numbers, reliability, accuracy, and warhead yield to destroy almost all the 1,047 U.S. ICBM silos, using only a small portion of their own ICBM force."

Alexis A. Gilliland says I do not understand destabilization. I think I understand it all too well. Nothing is more destabilizing than a situation in which the Soviet Union possesses 4,560 accurate and highly destructive ICBM warheads and we possess 1,650 warheads of comparable accuracy, of which, in fact, only 900 come close to matching the Soviet weapons in destructive power.

Nicholas T. Sakell asks about a discrepancy between the text and a footnote in relation to the survival prospects of our Minuteman missiles. The 57-percent figure in the footnote is the so-called Single Shot Kill Probability, i.e., the chance that one warhead will destroy the missile silo. General Vessey's estimate that 70 to 75 percent of our missiles would be destroyed in their silos is based not only on the Single Shot Kill Probability but also on information furnished by his experts as to how many warheads the Soviets would target on each silo, the likelihood of a successful launch of each Soviet ICBM, the probable strategy of their attack, and so on. The distinction between these estimates should have been clarified.

Bruce McKinney says American interests would best be served by getting rid of our ICBM's—the land leg of our strategic triad—because their main value is as a first-strike weapon. I believe—and I think most people in the U.S. and probably in the rest of the world agree—that an American first strike on the USSR is an impossibility. The importance of land-based missiles is quite different. They are not only accurate, but they also have a short flight time and relatively secure communication links to military authorities, properties not possessed by either of the other two legs—bombers and submarines—of the triad. The combination makes the land-based missile force uniquely valuable as a

deterrent to a Soviet attack, since it is the only force we possess that can destroy Soviet military sites and place at risk the Soviet military and political leadership. In the words of the Scowcroft report, American ICBM's "cast a shadow over the calculus of Soviet risk-taking."

## German Jewry

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

How assimilated were the German Jews? Opinions on the subject have varied widely, both among Jews and Gentiles, creating a strange set of alliances in their respective interpretations. Zionists and German nationalists alike believe—albeit for very different reasons—that the Jews had not become fully assimilated, or were indeed incapable of full integration. The parties of the Left and the liberals (ranging all the way from the German Communist party to the German Democratic party) took a more or less assimilationist position, though again from strikingly different perspectives. Jacob Katz, in his scholarly article, "German Culture and the Jews" [February], sides with those who believe that the Jews were not fully integrated into German society, but existed "as a separate subgroup, which happened to conform to the German middle class in certain of its characteristics." His thesis derives support from a vast body of scholarly literature that stresses the peculiar features of Jewish life and thought in Germany, and also from the knowledge of hindsight, the knowledge of German Jewry's grim fate after Hitler's seizure of power.

Generalizations of course are difficult to make. German society was always sharply divided. Class divisions were immense, and so were regional divisions. A great Mecklenburg landowner had nothing in common with his laborers. The daughter of a Lübeck merchant married to a Bavarian Catholic found herself in an almost alien society (as humorously recorded in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*). The Jews were equally divided. An Orthodox cattle trader from Upper Hesse stood worlds apart from an industrial magnate like Walter Rathenau. A Jewish cabinet maker, say, from a working-class district of Berlin, a loyal Social Democrat, shared nothing with a man like Walter von Mossner, a Jewish-descended cavalry general and, at one time, governor of Strassburg.

The fashion and chronology of Jewish acculturation differed widely. Historians have paid much attention to its intellectual aspects. But there were others. Rolf Vogel in *Ein Stück von Uns: deutsche Juden in den deutschen Heeren, 1813-1976* ("A Part of Us: German Jews in the German Army, 1813-1976") tells a fascinating story of the Jewish wife of a Jewish sergeant-major in the Prussian army during the Napoleonic wars. Her husband joined the colors; she also enlisted, served with distinction in combat, and rose to the rank of sergeant-major. She had clearly become integrated into her particular society.

There were equally striking differences in local attitudes. Rhenish cities such as Mainz had a long-standing tradition of relative tolerance (as borne out, say, by the reminiscences of Ludwig Bamberger concerning his childhood in the 19th century). He would probably have experienced more hostility had he been brought up in a little town in Franconia. But overall, the Jews were far more effectively integrated than Mr. Katz assumes. The great bulk of non-Jewish Germans may or may not have liked their Jewish compatriots. But German opinion as a whole did not simply regard the Jews as members of a foreign ethnic community, on a par with Danes in Schleswig, Poles in Upper Silesia, or (in the pre-World War I period) French-speakers in Alsace-Lorraine. Even a Nazi apologist like Heinrich Schnee, a former German colonial governor, argued—to the Jews' disadvantage—before the League of Nations that the League had no right to meddle with the Jewish question in Upper Silesia on the grounds that the Jews did not form a separate national group.

In a sense, Schnee was right. The Jews, for instance, frequently intermarried. (According to the standard *Philo-Lexikon* [1937 edition], the total number of mixed marriages in the 19th and 20th centuries was estimated at 720,000; of these, 653,000 were contracted between 1895 and 1932.) By 1933, something like one-third of the total of Jewish marriages were mixed. Some of these unions provided a means of raising the Jewish partner in the social sphere (for example, when a banker's daughter provided a financial dowry to better the financial fortunes of an impoverished Pomeranian nobleman). But the great

majority of such marriages took place among people of similar educational and occupational background. In the 19th century already a Jewish court musician in the Grand Duchy of Hesse might marry, say, the daughter of a Christian music publisher; the daughter of a Lutheran pastor would wed a Jewish newspaper editor like Friedrich Dernburg, father of Bernhard Dernburg, a reformist colonial secretary in the Wilhelmian era. Lower on the social ladder, a Jewish Social Democratic cabinet maker might welcome as a son-in-law a fellow Social Democrat of Lutheran provenance, on the grounds that the suitor was a good party comrade who would not get drunk, chase women of ill repute, or beat his wife.

The conventional image of the German Jew has been distorted in two separate ways: by excessive emphasis on "alienation," now a literary cult word, and by excessive stress on the work of a small number of Jewish psychiatrists, sociologists, and men of letters who were quite unrepresentative of the bulk of German Jews. The radical intellectuals of the Weimar period felt themselves alienated from their own society. They also saw themselves as an enlightened vanguard chosen by destiny to guide the backward masses, if not in a political, then at least in a cultural, sense. Alienated leftist intellectuals share both these characteristics today. Weimar culture provides them in part with an ascribed historical lineage, and helps to explain contemporary interest in the leftist traditions of Weimar and the *Kaiserreich*. This has led to the neglect of what might be called "muscular Judaism" in Germany. Hence the work of a Jewish colonial administrator in East Africa before World War I, or the exploits of a World War I Jewish air ace like Wilhelm Frankl, go unmentioned in most contemporary literature. (The former was honored, oddly enough, in a postage stamp issued by the Nazis, and only withdrawn when they caught on to his Jewish origin.) . . .

The great majority of German Jews of course had no knowledge of those alienated Jewish intellectuals who have since become widely accepted as representative of German Jewry. The average Jewish businessman or lawyer was not concerned with Freud or Adler. He had never heard of those Jewish scholars prominent, say, in the

Frankfurt school of sociology, whose writings have now attained such prominence. In 1933, no more than 12.5 percent of German Jews made their living in the public services or the professions—most of them in a quite modest capacity, as provincial lawyers, general medical practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, teachers, and the like. Nearly one-quarter (23.1 percent) were artisans or industrial workers. Many (61.3 percent) were employed in commerce—a large percentage of them as owners of small stores or as commercial travelers, accountants, bookkeepers; industrial magnates and bankers formed but a small percentage.

Overall, these Jewish businessmen—small or large—had a bad press, not merely from anti-Semites, but also from Jewish publicists. Zionists deplored the Jews' preoccupation with commerce, and called for a "healthier" form of occupational stratification. Radicals, from Karl Marx to Kurt Tucholsky, jeered at the merchants as philistines and humbugs, or caricatured them. . . .

Yet this Jewish bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie deserved a better hearing than they usually got. . . . Whereas Tucholsky and his friends uncomprehendingly labored to undermine the Weimar republic, the merchants had a better understanding of Germany's real needs in supporting Weimar. The majority of German Jews mostly voted for moderate bourgeois parties (especially the German Democratic party). Progressive folklore concerning the merchants' alleged philistinism notwithstanding, they supported the arts, including modern art. . . . They filled their library shelves with the German classics. . . . They continued to maintain the values of the German Enlightenment, a perfectly legitimate German tradition.

How far were they integrated as individuals into their respective local communities through associations such as the *Liedertafel* (glee club), the *Turnverein* (athletic association), the veterans' league, or the conventional *Stammtisch* in the local pub? Clearly, conditions differed widely. Anti-Semitism was certainly a social force. But I suspect that there was less alienation among the rank and file of German Jews than among those intellectuals who have since shaped the image of the German Jews.

What of the ultimate objection—that the terrors of Nazism disprove the reality of cultural assimilation?

Was not the destruction of German Jewry preordained by history itself? I do not think so. It is far from certain that all the roads of German history inevitably led to the Third Reich. It is at least conceivable that, given slightly different circumstances, the Republic might have survived in some shape or other. Anti-Semitism, the point bears repeating, was certainly a powerful force. But it did not spring so much from hatred against the real and known Jews in the same village or in the same town. Anti-Semitism, as elaborated by the Nazis, derived from an ideological construct that underpinned the Nazis' Manichean world view, providing a legitimation for bureaucratic terror and its salaried proponents and beneficiaries. The German Jewish victims of the Nazi terror were Jews certainly; but they were also Germans. Their disaster was both a Jewish and a German tragedy.

L. H. GANN

Hoover Institution  
Stanford, California

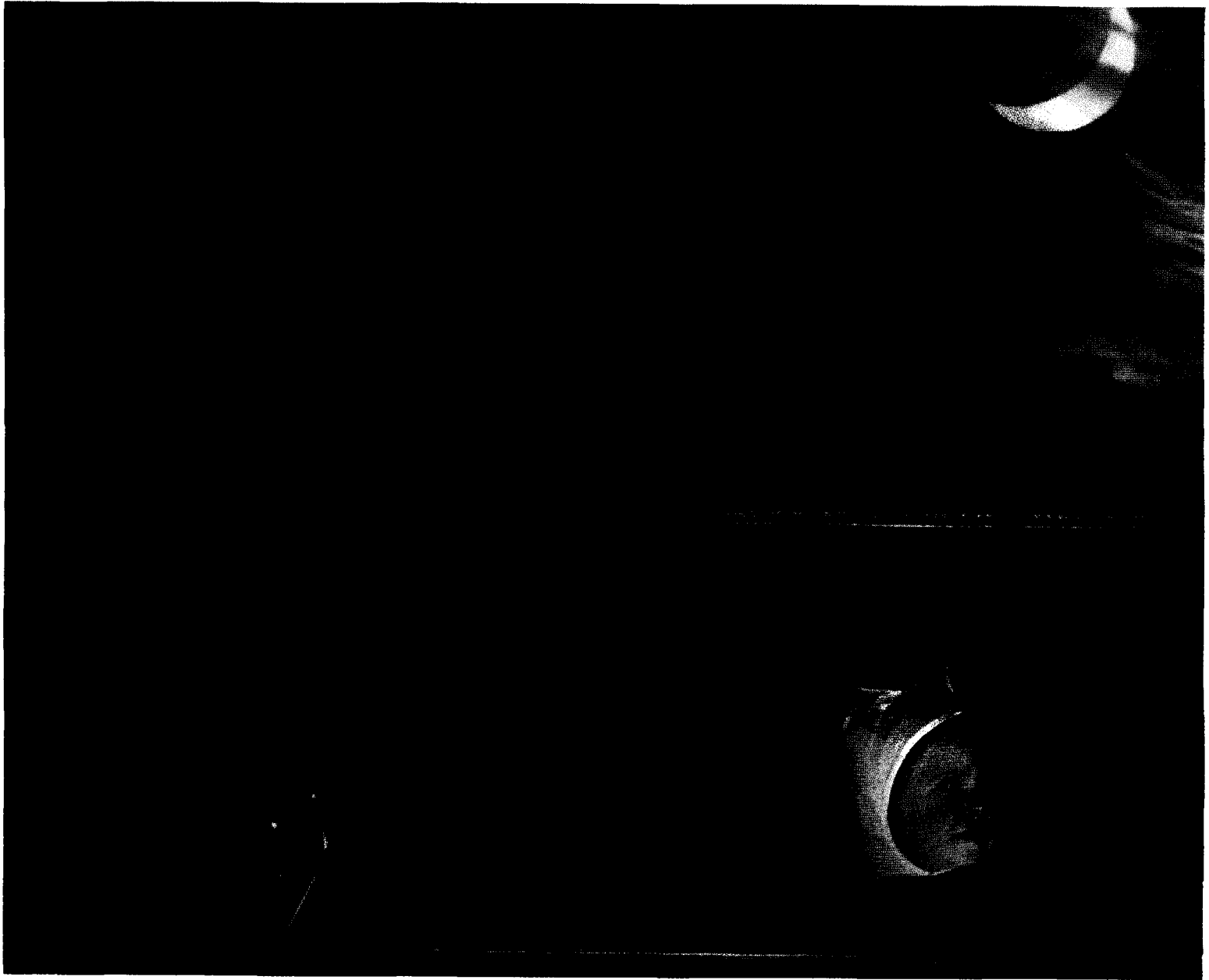
#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For a long time now I have been puzzled by the paradox of seeing so many distinguished Jewish writers resurrecting and endorsing one of Hitler's monstrous delusions—namely, that German Jews were not German. Jacob Katz's article, "German Culture and the Jews," is but the latest exhibit of what has become a stereotype compulsion.

Mr. Katz's method of attempting to prove his thesis that German Jews were not really "assimilated" is one that can be used to prove that the moon is made of green cheese. He begins by reaffirming his assertion of "almost half a century ago" that Jews had not assimilated into "the German people," but only into a certain layer of it, the newly emerged middle class. It boggles my mind to imagine how people who were engaged in trade, music, scholarship, cattle raising, and similar middle-class occupations could have become "assimilated" into any class other than the middle class. Why should this inevitable development have made Jews any less "assimilated" into "the German people," apparently viewed by Mr. Katz, as it was by the Nazis, as some mythical monolithic entity, than if they had contributed their quota to ditch diggers and pickpockets?

Mr. Katz's second proposition for proving his case is that German Jews "were more intensely involved

# A REASSURI



Every car maker has to meet the Federal requirements for safety and damageability. But Ford goes beyond those requirements in many important areas.

For example, all our cars have bumpers that are four times as strong as the government demands. (A fact GM, Chrysler, even Mercedes

and Volvo can't claim.)

We were the first major U.S. manufacturer to put halogen headlamps and steel-belted radials as standard equipment on all our cars. And we were also the first to offer an optional package of occupant protection features, including seatbelts and padded instrument panels.

**You're going**

\*Based on a survey of owner reported problems during the first three months of ownership of 1983 vehicles.

\*\*Offered by participating dealers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NG QUALITY.

Every new Ford, Mercury and Lincoln comes  
with 39 Lifeguard Design Safety Features.  
To help protect your precious cargo.

Get it together — buckle up.

All of this, however, is just a small part of our commitment to build safe, reliable cars and trucks.

We also live up to that commitment by building those cars and trucks very, very carefully.

The fact is, a survey of thousands of new car and truck owners has shown that Ford is building the highest quality vehicles of any major U.S.

manufacturer.\*

To learn more about all our 1984 models, and to get the details on the Lifetime Service Guarantee,\*\* talk to your Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer.

We think that what you find out will be very reassuring.

**to love the quality.**



**Quality is Job 1.**

FORD • LINCOLN • MERCURY •  
FORD TRUCKS • FORD TRACTORS  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the cultivation of their *Bildung* [education] than were their Gentile counterparts. They were more avid readers of literature, they frequented theaters and concert halls in numbers far disproportionate to their presence in the population." Quite apart from Mr. Katz's having switched his statistical universe from the middle class to the "population," this statistical contention, for which, we are told, "there are no statistical data," would be irrelevant to his thesis, even if proved. The Swabian bourgeoisie, particularly the Protestant parsons' families which formed part of it, contributed to German literature in numbers far disproportionate to their presence in the population. These parsons and their families read more books, went to more concerts, painted more pictures, filled more chairs at the universities, and showed more unusual responsiveness to Goethe and Schiller than their compatriots among Austrian customs officials in Linz or bricklayers in Mönchen-Gladbach. Yet I doubt that Mr. Katz would contend that these worthy divines were not assimilated into the German people.

In short, this line of argument is preposterous. But worse is to come. After having served us pop sociology and specious statistical reasoning, Mr. Katz bolsters his case with expert witnesses, who turn out to be two of the most psychopathic geniuses in the history of Western civilization: Richard Wagner and Karl Marx. Somehow or other—I must admit the logic of the argument escapes me—Wagner's anti-Semitic pamphlet, *Das Judentum in der Musik*, and Karl Marx's anti-Semitic writings are supposed to show that German culture rejected the stellar contributions of Jewish Germans. But all that Wagner's and Marx's lunatic effusions prove to ordinary people of common sense is that then, as now, anti-Semites plied their trade, including, like Karl Marx, Jewish anti-Semites. Then, as now, there were similar ravings against Roman Catholics; indeed, virulent anti-Catholicism (and anti-Freemasonry) was usually as much a stock-in-trade of "*völkische*" nuts, like General Ludendorff, as was anti-Semitism. Did that make Roman Catholic Germans less German or "unassimilated"?

An equally specious line of argument in Mr. Katz's article is predicated on the erroneous assertion that German Jewish authors did not write about Jewish themes and

characters. Having casually dismissed the counter-evidence of Heine's *Rabbi of Bacharach* ("[a] potentiality not realized, or realized only in the most rudimentary form"), Mr. Katz rests that part of his case on a popular Jewish writer, Berthold Auerbach, who, we are told, transposed a story about the religious crisis of a Jewish theological student into one about a Catholic seminarian. "A forthright *yeshiva* setting . . . would have alienated the reading public." How does Mr. Katz know? It is much more likely that Auerbach, whose first books *were* about Jewish characters, switched because those books were, to quote Hugo Bieber, "mediocre biographical romances, showing all the weaknesses and none of the virtues of this genre." On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that Jewish themes did not alienate the German public. For instance, Salomon Hermann Mosenthal's tragedy *Deborah*, about a Jewish girl growing up in a Catholic village, opened in Berlin in 1850 and was popular for more than a decade.

Mosenthal's play also shows that it is simply not true that German Jewish writers did not write about Jewish life and Jewish characters. A prime counter-exhibit is Georg Hermann (1871-1943; he was murdered in Auschwitz), as good a popular novelist as Auerbach, whose delightful novels, *Jettchen Gebert* (1906) and *Henriette Jacoby* (1908), describe the life of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Biedermeier Berlin. There were countless others: Rahel Varnhagen's brother Ludwig Robert (1780-1832), Fanny Lewald (1811-89), Leopold Kompert (1822-86), Edward Kulke (1831-97), and Karl Emil Franzos (1848-1904), who wrote tales about the ghetto; and later in the 19th and then in the 20th century, Arthur Schnitzler, Jakob Wasserman, Lion Feuchtwanger, Stefan Zweig, Arnold Zweig, Max Brod, and Richard Beer-Hofmann. . . . In reality most German Jewish writers at the outset and after emancipation neither "entirely avoided" Jewish themes nor limited themselves to them.

The final, and most astounding, of Mr. Katz's assertions, for which he relies again on Richard Wagner as a star witness, is his endorsement of another Nazi delusion, namely, that Jews could not speak proper German, but spoke it with special Jewish accents and intonations. "Exaggerated though this assertion

was," Mr. Katz maintains, "*it had some basis in reality*" (emphasis added). A pity he did not know my grandmothers. Perhaps that acquaintance would have spared us this article.

FRANZ M. OPPENHEIMER  
Washington, D.C.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Katz's treatment of the interactions between Jews and German culture since the late 18th century is a refreshing change from some recent discussions of this subject. It steers clear of the pitfall of blind idolatry of German Jewish culture on the one hand, and, on the other, it avoids sneering at the pathetic self-delusions which characterized this once glorious and now defunct branch of Jewish culture.

A minor flaw in the article is the etymology of the German word, *mauscheln*, a verb which to Germans and to German Jews alike meant anything from speaking Yiddish to speaking German with a Jewish pronunciation or with a Jewish rhythm. Mr. Katz attributes the origin of this word to the Jewish name Moshe—to speak like Moshe. This is a plausible origin, which is cited in several German dictionaries. However, another etymology is possible. The related German noun, *Mauschel*, a derisive term for a Jew, is translated in older German-English dictionaries by the 18th-century English term smouch, meaning a Jew, a usurer. This in turn is derived from the Yiddish *shmooz*, talk, which derives from the Hebrew *shemua*, news, tidings. Thus this derogatory term for a Jew means nothing more than one who shmoozes, talks like a Jew, or, in German, *mauschels*.

It is ironic that in failing to recognize in this German word what may well be a literal borrowing from the Hebrew, Mr. Katz exemplifies one of the sad flaws of most German Jews, namely, their belief that the interactions between the two cultures were purely a one-way flow. Actually, German, like other European languages, has many adoptions from the Hebrew. Our enemies saw the matter more clearly. The Wagner circle, as Mr. Katz points out, as well as its more thorough followers in the 1930's, never failed to complain about the evil of Jewish contamination of the purity of the German language and culture.

PAUL HABERFIELD  
Brooklyn, New York

JACOB KATZ writes:

L. H. Gann begins by asking "How assimilated were the German Jews"? The rest of his letter, if I understand him correctly, is an attempt to disprove my assertion that "the entry of Jewry as a *collective* into the body of German society . . . did not mean real integration." Yet in my opinion nothing that he adduces contradicts my thesis; in fact, some of his observations even seem to support it.

That individual Jews succeeded in being not only culturally assimilated but accepted and absorbed into German society—and that their number even achieved statistical significance—does not alter the fact that those who remained within the fold, tied to their "clan" and community, stood out as a special subgroup. A subgroup does not signify a "foreign ethnic community" claiming minority status; the lack of a different national language would invalidate such a claim on the part of Jews. Yet other, perhaps less conspicuous but still visible peculiarities remained.

The one-sided occupational stratification of Jews is a case in point. Mr. Gann is mistaken when he says that it was the Zionists and possibly the radical socialists who "deplored the Jews' preoccupation with commerce." The weaning of Jewish youth from the traditional occupations of their parents was a constant theme of Jewish as well as Gentile promoters of emancipation. They wanted to see Jews spread out over the entire range of occupations, thus removing one of the most disturbing features of Jewish "anomalousness." Economic and sociological factors of course militated against such a trend, and the endeavor ended in what I called (in the title of a chapter in my book, *Out of the Ghetto*) "The Futile Flight from Jewish Professions."

Jewish peculiarities came to the fore in the very process of acculturation, and the main thrust of my article was to point out the overemphasis the Jews placed on cultural participation; paradoxically, this is what singled them out as a special subgroup. But there are other, even more subtle, phenomena of this kind, and Mr. Gann himself inadvertently provides a good ex-

ample when he says that Jews "continued to maintain the values of the German Enlightenment, a perfectly legitimate German tradition." It has often been observed that German Jews, for reasons of their own, continued to follow the ideas of the Enlightenment long after German society at large had already abandoned them—another indication of the incongruent development of the two groups.

Having no data, Mr. Gann speculates that "there was less alienation among the rank and file of German Jews than among those intellectuals who have since shaped the image of the German Jews," and in this connection he brings up the issue of the integration of individuals into their "respective local communities through associations such as the *Liedertafel* (glee club)" and the like. Yet we do possess exact knowledge of what happened with one associational group, the Freemasons. In the 19th century many middle-class Germans belonged to local chapters of the Freemasons, and acculturated Jews naturally aspired to join as well. In my book *Freemasons and Jews* I was able to present a clear picture of how the Jews fared in their attempts to become Freemasons. In the first decades of the century, they were universally rejected; about mid-century, with the advancement of liberalism, they made steady headway; then, with the outbreak of anti-Semitism in the 1870's, the tide was reversed, and most of the lodges once again became *judenrein*.

As to Mr. Gann's last and most pertinent question, I am in full agreement that the Nazi terror does not disprove the reality of cultural assimilation. The German-Jewish catastrophe was not the preordained result of preceding events, but neither was it simply the handiwork of the Nazis alone. There must have been historical preconditions which, though not making the catastrophe inevitable, still permitted it to happen.

The work of a whole generation of scholars has by now gone into the effort to trace the antecedents of Nazism in the anti-Semitic period of the Second Reich. I myself side with those who predate the seeds of

the catastrophe, tracing them to the deceptive auspices under which Jews entered German society at the time of the emancipation—a thesis to which I alluded in my article and which I have tried to substantiate in my book on the history of modern anti-Semitism, *From Prejudice to Destruction*.

As for the objections raised by Franz M. Oppenheimer, I respond to them only with great reluctance. Someone whose thinking does not go beyond the crude alternatives that either Hitler was right or one must declare German Jews to have been full-fledged Germans should not be party to complex historical discussions. Indeed, Mr. Oppenheimer is not even capable of reproducing correctly what he has read in my article, the logical faults of which he thinks he has detected. I started my essay by declaring that I had turned away from an earlier conclusion of mine, yet Mr. Oppenheimer says I begin by "reaffirming" it. I wrote that the practice of choosing Jewish themes for literary creation was avoided by writers of "the first generation of integration"; Mr. Oppenheimer comes up with a list of authors, all of whom belong to a later time. My statement about the residual Yiddish in Jewish speech again referred explicitly to the early generations, but Mr. Oppenheimer thinks I was talking about his grandmothers.

When it comes to his own view, Mr. Oppenheimer has a simple method—he declares the opponents of the Jews to have been lunatics and consoles himself that others besides Jews, including Catholics and Freemasons, were also victims of "*völkische* nuts." Such arguments used to be the self-deceiving weapons of the extreme assimilationists in pre-Hitler Germany. That they should be resurrected in Washington, D.C. in our own day is indeed amazing.

I am glad to have an appreciative reader in Paul Haberfield, and hope that he represents the majority. I followed the standard dictionaries on the origin of the word "*mauschel*," but being no linguist, I cannot say if Mr. Haberfield's theory is valid. I fail to see, however, what difference it makes from the standpoint of cultural interaction, since the root is in any case a Hebrew word.



## Can the Democracies Survive?

*Jean-François Revel*

DEMOCRACY may, after all, turn out to have been a historical accident, a brief parenthesis that is closing before our eyes.

If so, in its modern sense of a form of society reconciling governmental efficiency with legitimacy, authority with individual freedoms, democracy will have lasted a little over two centuries, to judge by the speed at which the forces bent on its destruction are growing. And, really, only a tiny minority of the human race will have experienced it. In both time and space, democracy fills a very small corner. The span of roughly two-hundred years applies only to the few countries where it first appeared, still very incomplete, at the end of the 18th century. Most of the other countries in which democracy exists adopted it under a century ago, under half a century ago, in some cases less than a decade ago.

Democracy probably could endure if it were the only type of political organization in the world. But it is not basically structured to defend itself against outside enemies seeking its annihilation, especially since the latest and the most dangerous of these external enemies—Communism—parades as democracy perfected when it is in fact the absolute negation of democracy, the current and complete model of totalitarianism.

Democracy is by its very nature turned inward. Its vocation is the patient and realistic improvement of life in a community. Communism, on the other hand, necessarily looks outward because it presides over a failed society and is incapable of engendering a viable one. The *nomenklatura*, the body of bureaucrat-dictators who govern the system, has no choice, therefore, but to direct its abilities toward expansion abroad. It is also more skillful, more persevering than democracy in defending itself. Democracy tends to ignore, even deny, threats to its existence because it loathes

doing what is needed to counter them. It awakens only when the danger becomes deadly, imminent, evident. By then, either there is too little time left for it to save itself, or the price of survival has become crushingly high.

In addition to its external enemy (once Nazi, now Communist), whose intellectual energy and economic power are primarily destructive, democracy faces an internal enemy whose right to exist is written into the law itself.

Totalitarianism liquidates its internal enemies or smashes opposition as soon as it arises; it uses methods that are simple and infallible because they are undemocratic. But democracy can defend itself from within only very feebly; its internal enemy has an easy time of it because he exploits the right to disagree that is inherent in democracy. His aim of destroying democracy itself, of actively seeking an absolute monopoly of power, is shrewdly hidden behind the citizen's legitimate right to oppose and criticize the system. Paradoxically, democracy offers those seeking to abolish it a unique opportunity to work against it legally. They can even receive almost open support from the external enemy without its being seen as a truly serious violation of the social contract. The frontier is vague, the transition easy between the status of a loyal opponent wielding a privilege built into democratic institutions, and that of an adversary subverting those institutions. To totalitarianism, an opponent is by definition subversive; democracy, for fear of betraying its principles, treats subversives as mere opponents.

What we end up with in what is conventionally called Western society is a topsy-turvy situation in which those seeking to destroy democracy appear to be fighting for legitimate aims, while the defenders of democracy are pictured as repressive reactionaries. Identification of democracy's internal and external adversaries with the forces of progress, legitimacy, even peace, discredits and paralyzes the efforts of people who are only trying to preserve their institutions.

Already besieged by this combination of hostile forces and negative logic, the democracies are also harassed by guilt-producing accusations and intimidation such as no other political system has ever had to tolerate. Like the "industry of vice"

JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL, the distinguished French political commentator, is the author of *Without Marx or Jesus* and *The Totalitarian Temptation*, among other books. The present essay is drawn from his new book, a long and detailed analysis of the disadvantages from which democracies suffer in their conflict with totalitarianism. Entitled *How Democracies Perish*, it will be published by Doubleday later this year. Copyright © 1983 by Jean-François Revel; translation copyright © 1984 by William F. Byron.

that reform groups used to talk about, there is now an "industry of blame"; it promotes the now universally accepted notion that everything bad that happens in the Third World is the fault of forces necessarily and exclusively located in the "more advanced" or "rich" countries, meaning, in almost every case—and for good reason—the democracies.

The major shareholders in this industry of blame are, first, the despots who oppress the peoples of that unfortunate Third World with impunity. Next come the Communist countries, exploiting the underdevelopment abroad that they cannot remedy at home and converting the poor nations into totalitarian military fortresses.

Here too, in what are termed North-South relations, foreign and domestic enemies of democracy are converging; their maneuvers are of no help at all in improving the lot of the poor countries, but they are marvelously effective in undermining the democracies' confidence in their own legitimacy, their own right to exist. The "progressive" support some Westerners give to the worst of the Third World regimes is merely a geographical relocation of what for sixty years was "progressive" support of the Soviet Union and, later, Mao Zedong's China: complicity by a part of the Western Left *against* the peoples of the less-developed countries and *with* the tyrants who enslave, brutalize, starve, and exterminate them.

It seems, then, that the combination of forces—at once psychological and material, political and moral, economic and ideological—intent on the extinction of democracy is more powerful than those bent on keeping it alive. Democracy is not given credit for its achievements and benefits, but it pays an infinitely higher price for its failures, its inadequacies, and its mistakes than its adversaries do.

**I**NDEED, democratic civilization is the first in history to blame itself because another power is working to destroy it. The distinguishing mark of our century is not so much Communism's determination to erase democracy from our planet, or its frequent success in pursuing that end, as it is the humility with which democracy not only consents to its own obliteration, but contrives to legitimize the victory of its deadliest enemy.

It is natural for Communism to try with all its might to eliminate democracy, since the two systems are incompatible and Communism's survival depends on the annihilation of democracy. That the Communist offensive is more successful, more skillful than democracy's resistance, will be seen by history as just another example of one power outmaneuvering another. But it is less natural and more novel that the stricken civilization should not only be deeply convinced that it deserves to be defeated, but that it should regale its friends

and foes with reasons why defending itself would be immoral and, in any event, superfluous, useless, even dangerous.

Civilizations losing confidence in themselves: an old story in history. They stop believing they can survive, because of an internal crisis that is both insoluble and intolerable, or under threat from an external enemy so strong that the only remaining choice is between servitude and suicide. I do not believe democracy is in either predicament, but it acts as if it were in both. It seems almost eager to believe in its own guilt and in the inevitable result of that guilt. Democracy's predecessors hid such beliefs as shameful even when they thought, or knew, they were doomed. But democracy is zealous in devising arguments to prove the justice of its adversary's case and to lengthen the already overwhelming list of its own inadequacies.

Are these inadequacies real or imaginary? Some are real, of course, just as there is real cause to blame specific democracies or the democracies in general for some of the injustice and misfortune in the world. But many of these alleged inadequacies and much of the democracies' responsibility for the world's ills are exaggerated or conjectural or purely imaginary. And besides, are those real faults serious enough to provide moral justification for totalitarianism to exterminate the democracies? And why are the imaginary flaws so widely credited in the democracies themselves, which thus consent to their own calumny?

If democracy does succumb, it will not be to the sort of internal crisis, an essential lack of viability, that nearly wrecked it between the two world wars. From 1919 to 1939, the democracies seemed to be eaten from within by an irresistible malady that raised a rash of right-wing dictatorships. One after another, they capitulated to authoritarian or totalitarian governments born of their own inability to govern themselves. In Central Europe, almost none of the parliamentary regimes established after World War I were still functioning ten years later. In Western Europe, first Italy went fascist, then Portugal, Germany, Spain. Of the great European powers, only Britain and France remained faithful to democracy, and in France democracy was so feeble, so incoherent, and so beleaguered that there were grave fears for its survival.

The situation now, as the century nears its end, is nothing like that. For the first time since 1922, when Mussolini took power in Rome, all of Western Europe is democratic. The Greek colonels' seven-year dictatorship (1967-74) ended with their fall and a reinforcement of democracy there. In Spain, the *Putsch* dreaded since 1975 was tried and failed. The most dangerous, most unrelenting attacks against democracy have come from the revolutionary Left: red terrorism in Italy, Spain, and West Germany, and a minority attempt in

1975 to saddle Portugal with a Communist military dictatorship.

Despite these trials, the old democracies have held firm and the new ones have survived and even developed. The laborious effort the Left periodically makes to frighten people with the specter of a neo-Nazi peril in Europe always collides with the brute fact that none of the fascist movements in Europe today has reached party status or has managed to elect a member of any parliament. As for the stupidly inflated notion of an "extra-parliamentary Left" that flourished in Italy and Germany around 1970, it expressed nothing more than the revolutionary Left's inability to seduce enough voters into making it parliamentary.

Yet while democratic institutions are no longer challenged politically from within, the societies, civilization, and values democracy has created are being increasingly questioned. Self-criticism is, of course, one of the vital springs of democratic civilization and one of the reasons for its superiority over all other systems. But constant self-condemnation, often with little or no foundation, is a source of weakness and inferiority in dealing with an imperial power that has dispensed with such scruples. Believing one is always right, even when the facts say otherwise, is as blinding and weakening to a society as to an individual. But assuming one is always wrong, whatever the truth may be, is discouraging and paralyzing.

Not only do the democracies today blame themselves for sins they have not committed, they have formed the habit of judging themselves by ideals so inaccessible that the defendants are automatically guilty. Clearly a civilization that feels guilty for everything it is and does and thinks will lack the energy and conviction to defend itself when its existence is threatened. Drilling the idea into a civilization that it deserves defending only if it can incarnate absolute justice is tantamount to urging that it let itself die or be enslaved.

THE same problem has invariably plagued the foreign policy of the democracies in the struggle against Communist imperialism. From the day President Truman declared that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure," the democracies were locked of their own free will into an almost insurmountable bind. For they laid down the condition that to have the right to resist absorption into the Communist empire, a country must be irreproachably democratic. In so doing, the West condemned itself to failure or opprobrium. It became the prisoner of an insoluble, self-imposed dilemma: either it allowed most of the planet to sink under Communist domination, or, too often, it would be called on to protect countries that did not have democratic governments.

The trap was a boon to Communist propaganda, which on this point was widely supported by the liberal Left in the democracies. And honesty does command that any democrat with consistent ideas deplore the hypocrisy of defending human rights and individual freedom while supporting authoritarian governments. The best of these may be no more than relics or revivals of archaic power structures, the worst are violent, police-run fascist regimes, or pseudo-democracies where elections are held only spasmodically; rarely, if ever, are they genuinely faithful to the ideal of the rule of law on which the West claims to base the legitimacy of its diplomacy and its defense.

From the outset, then, the game has been unfair. Strategic necessity is regarded as justification enough for a Soviet presence in another country, or a Soviet alliance with or aid to that country; anyone calling for further excuses is requested, even in the West itself, to mind his own business. A democracy, on the other hand, is not granted the right to defend the vital barricades of its own security unless the democratic imperative is obeyed. If it is not, the West's duty is evidently to cede the territory in question to the Communists who are unhampered by this democratic obligation.

Thus, defending the independence of South Vietnam in the 1960's and 70's was tinged with infamy because the South Vietnamese regime was hardly one of exemplary purity. But the Hanoi regime had no need to furnish guarantees of its purity to win the right to defend itself or to attack its neighbors. Progressive and even centrist opinion throughout the world granted North Vietnam "popular" legitimacy on trust, which its history after 1975 did not support, but which its totalitarian and aggressive behavior even before 1975 never seemed to diminish.

Better still: if Moscow's worldwide strategic interests so require, the Soviet Union is allowed to ally itself with traditional-style fascist regimes that dispense with even a façade of progressivism. And the Soviets can do so without bringing down on their heads the vehement criticism that world opinion levels at any democratic nation attempting the same expedient. The Soviet Union and Cuba, for example, loudly took Argentina's side against Britain in the 1982 Falkland Islands war simply because it was obviously in the Kremlin's interest to oppose the Western democracies; suddenly, no one in the Communist world minded the evil international reputation of the "odious and bloody fascist dictatorship" of the junta in Buenos Aires.

The Soviet Union, then, is licensed by most people to safeguard its economic interests and capitalize on its strategic advantages by realistic links with any government notorious for its disregard of human rights. But we hear only clamor and vituperation when a Western country is cornered

into collaboration with South Africa or the Shah's Iran or Turkey.

This double standard gives the Soviet empire an automatic advantage over the West: it not only can defend itself and expand without having to bother about the rules governing the foreign policy of the democracies, but its satellites and clients are also exempted. This is really a two-pronged advantage: although it need not respect human rights at home, the Soviet empire is free to condemn violations, real or fictitious, anywhere else, to exploit them and set its agents to exploiting them. It can even provoke violations, using terrorism to elicit repression in the Western countries or those associated with them.

The Soviet Union, then, enjoys the privilege of being entitled not only to defend its empire, but to enlarge it without being judged on the basis of its subject states' standards of living, social justice, political freedoms, or respect for human rights. When subjugated peoples rise against Communism, the West usually refrains from helping them, thus recognizing the legitimacy of Communist domination in all circumstances. The Communists, on the other hand, recognize the legitimacy of no government outside their empire, least of all in the democratic countries.

Conversely, the democracies suffer the theoretical handicap in their struggle with the Soviet Union of being responsible on all the above-mentioned grounds both for their own behavior and for that of their allies. For example, when military governments took over in Greece in 1967, and in Turkey ten years later, the question immediately arose in the democracies of whether these countries, which had broken faith with democracy, deserved to remain within the Western defense system. But when Poland declared a state of martial law to allow its army to shore up the shaky Communist-party dictatorship, Westerners immediately argued that no real liberalization is possible in a country like Poland because *it is a vital strategic zone for the Soviet Union*. Yet Turkey is just as essential to the West as Poland is to the Soviets. Driving it out of NATO, or even suspending weapons shipments to the Turkish army (which was done because of the Greco-Turkish conflict over Cyprus in 1974), means opening a fatal breach in the Atlantic alliance's southern flank.

**D**ETRACTORS of the United States and the "free world"—the expression is usually employed as a term of derision, as though there were not really a free world and a slave world—have always maintained that we cannot fight in the name of democracy by consorting with non-democratic countries. And, of course, it would be ideal if the democracies could survive by defending only other democracies. In most cases, however, this moral ideal runs up against local

traditions of government or de-facto situations the West cannot easily alter. President Carter's human-rights policy, under which he suspended American aid to the dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, produced no political improvement in those countries, but the Soviet Union leaped into the breach to increase trade with them. In Iran, Carter hastened the fall of what was certainly a detestably tyrannical regime—which was succeeded by a much worse one.

It takes a profound ignorance of history to blame American imperialism alone for the long Latin American tradition of coups d'état, military dictatorships, civil wars, corruption, revolution, bloody terror, and repression; all this goes back to the very founding of independent states nearly two centuries ago. On the African continent, it is striking that one-man, one-party rule has triumphed almost everywhere, in North Africa and Black Africa, in the former French colonies as in the former Belgian and British colonies, in "progressive" and "moderate" regimes alike. Even such leaders as President-for-Life Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, after opting for multiparty systems when their countries received independence, soon changed their minds on the ground that one-party systems are "more in tune with the African character." Some of the most barbarous examples of internal genocide, like the slaughter in Burundi, had nothing at all to do with Western "imperialism"; neither have some of Africa's most monstrous tyrants, such as Uganda's Idi Amin. And for the people of Uganda, the country's "liberation" from Amin by troops from "progressive" Tanzania inaugurated an era of suffering and martyrdom that has been every bit as abominable as the one that preceded it.

In any case, the free world's moral turpitude and political inconsistency are recognized, proclaimed, and condemned whenever it collaborates with largely or wholly undemocratic governments that violate human rights, whether it merely accepts them passively or assists them actively. To escape this contradiction and avoid condemnation before the tribunal of free-world opinion, the West must therefore deny itself the support, in its struggle against Soviet expansionism, of any country that is undemocratic and disrespectful of human rights. This principle means that the right of the democracies to defend themselves must be subordinated to the conversion of the whole world to democracy. Clearly, this can only lead to the disappearance of what subsists of democracy in today's world.

In short, without always going so far as to approve, we nevertheless consider it natural for the Soviet Union to defend its interests, increase its power, install its henchmen through a craftily spaced series of coups d'état and purges. No one asks these imperialists to make the people they

capture happy; no one thinks the Communists can be scolded into retreating. Nor does anyone in the democratic camp recognize his own right—not openly, at least—to fight Soviet imperialism with its own weapons. Instead, the free world again risks being accused of impure complicity with a reactionary “feudal” regime when it defends Saudi Arabia, say, against the undermining and subversion that the Soviet Union and its agents, including the Libyans, have been carrying on there for years. The moral is that the Soviet Union must be allowed to take over the Arabian peninsula unless all the countries there mold themselves to Western democratic ideals, an eventuality I would wish for but scarcely expect, at least in the immediate future, which is all that counts.

ALSO at stake in the immediate or very near future is the fate of southern Africa, especially that of the Republic of South Africa, which has earned the rightful hostility of all defenders of human rights for its official policy of racial segregation. That it should be excluded from all international sports events is not surprising—until we remember that the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, and Rumania, which have as many or more human-rights blots on their records, do take part in these events.

This is another example of the double standard. But athletics is just a side issue here. What really matters is whether the West should, as the most enlightened and respectable voices of Western public opinion recommend, refuse any political and strategic cooperation with South Africa until apartheid has been eliminated. Considering that, at best, it would take a long time to end racial segregation in South Africa, that the Soviet Union is already strongly entrenched in the region, and that the slow process of reform might be radically accelerated by an uprising of South Africa’s blacks, the West might gain little from abandoning South Africa and would certainly be seriously weakened. For, as we know, the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope is the main channel for our supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf. Moreover, South Africa’s soil holds most of the world’s deposits of rare minerals outside the Soviet Union, supplying most of the metals needed by the industrialized countries.

In other words, if South Africa were to come under Soviet influence, Moscow would control not only its own vast mineral resources, but also those of South Africa and Namibia, where the pro-Communist SWAPO (Southwest African People’s Organization) is likely to take power. The Soviet Union would then have a stranglehold on most and, in some cases, all the minerals vital to our industries. It could block oil shipments to us—if it had not already shut them off at the source along the Persian Gulf. That kind of economic

power would make the Soviet Union master of the West without recourse to war, nuclear or conventional, in Europe.

The Soviet Union’s great strength lies in its freedom to invade areas where history has left the decaying remnants of archaic regimes that are important to the West’s security or are sources of vital materials. Never mind that these regimes are replaced, as they always are, by bloodier, more repressive Communist police states and that the change leaves the area’s poor more starved than they were before. The Soviets still come out ahead. For local and world opinion perceive the *relative* advantages of the old regime and the horrors of Communist putrefaction only after the new regime is in power and irreversible.

When the West tries to protect archaic regimes or those of “modernistic authoritarians” like the Shah of Iran from disintegration, or attempts to restrain their abuses, it cannot help seeming to defend the Right against the Left, the past against the future, the billionaires against the poverty-stricken masses. The fact that when the Communist Left overturns the Right it brings with it rampant famine, the camps, and the boat people never works as a *preventive*. If the West tries to pressure an archaic regime into becoming more liberal, either it is accused of “interference” by outraged nationalists, or its well-meaning proselytizing shoves the country into unforeseeable chaos, as exemplified by the Islamic revolution in Iran. And while the Ayatollah’s bloody terror may now be partly anti-Communist for essentially religious reasons, the Kremlin knows very well that in the long run, when the brink of anarchy is reached, Iran may topple into the Soviet camp, but is unlikely ever to tip back into the free world.

The Soviet Union’s advantage over the free world is that neither world opinion nor, of course, its own muzzled public expects it to preach to its allies before associating with them, or to hold on to its satellites by any method but sheer force; it is not even required to provide enough food for the peoples it absorbs into its imperial system.

But “international opinion”—the phrase describes part of the free world’s public opinion plus Soviet propaganda—will not accept violation of the rules of democracy by the West’s friends. Even when such countries as Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore develop thriving economies that most other nations in the Third World envy and that would bring cries of admiration from the Western Left if they blossomed under Soviet banners, they are not appreciated. For they have curtailed their citizens’ freedom. The socialist regimes, of course, have obliterated freedom without even achieving comparable prosperity.

THIS inequality of duties that so favors the Communists over the free world, however, prevents no one from turning around

and equating the two sides when argument requires it. The technique for doing this seems fair but is in fact discriminatory: it simply consists of lumping the democracies and the Soviets together in iniquity.

This technique represents a change of tactics. Almost throughout the 20th century, the politically cross-eyed Left in the democracies has unsheathed its fury only against the crimes of the capitalist world. Around 1970, the amnesia that periodically rejected unsavory disclosures about the Communist world began to show cracks. Tell-tale scars remained after each new cleansing absolution. Soon the mass of facts grew too dense to deny out of hand. At this point a new hoax was devised.

It consisted of admitting the existence of Communist crimes and failures provided these could instantly be matched by equivalents in the capitalist world. Communism was now absolved not because it never sins, but because the democracies sin as grievously. In this new dialectical game, everyone is free, without necessarily being dishonest, to retail the misdeeds and failings of totalitarian Communism, but on condition that we hasten to present their capitalist twins. Any deviation from the rule is immediately vilified as "selective indignation" and earns the severe censure of impartial players.

For example, a doctrinally pure French Socialist, Louis Mermaz, president of the National Assembly since 1981, replied to a reporter's question about the gulags: "I am as horrified as you are by the gulags, which are a perversion of Communism. But I ask that you also condemn that monstrosity of the capitalist system: hunger throughout the world that kills 50 million people each year, 30 million of them children." The retort, remarkable for its speed, is less so for its objectivity. For the parallel is only apparent: the gulags are a "perversion" of Communism, but famine, according to the Socialist leader, is a product of the basic nature of capitalism. And while the magic of parallelism makes the Communist sin almost venial, that of capitalism remains mortal. Indeed, absolution is usually a one-way grant—to forgive the horrors of Communism. It seems unlikely that, if questioned on famine in the world, Mermaz would have replied with a diatribe against the gulags; he would have protested violently against the shocking malnutrition of some of our fellow humans, and he would have been right. That the gulags exist does not make Third World poverty less morally intolerable. But by what sorcery is the reverse true?

Besides, the magician was using phony statistics. As demographers know, some 50 million people die in the world every year. They can't all die of starvation and three-fifths of them can't be children. The fight against infant mortality in the poor countries has reduced its incidence, which is

why their populations are increasing. Nutritionists estimate the number of deaths annually due to malnutrition at 10 percent of the total *and this includes the Communist countries*, which slightly weakens the indictment of capitalism. Death from starvation in the Communist world may be better hidden, but the victims are just as dead as any others. Mao's successors have confirmed what demographers had already determined from their study of Chinese population patterns: that tens of millions of Chinese died of starvation in 1960-70.

A final objection to the Mermaz comparison: the gulags came into being by *deliberate* political decisions of Communist governments, whereas historically, capitalism has in fact rid Europe of the periodic famines that plagued it until the middle of the 18th century, as they now do the less-developed countries. Capitalism has even begun to relieve starvation in some of the poorer countries, India and Brazil for example, which now export foodstuffs. Much, enormously much, remains to be done everywhere before all mankind can enjoy the high nutritional standard that not even the capitalist West reached until the 19th century. But this problem has nothing whatever to do with the question at issue: the deliberate creation by an organized political regime of a repressive concentration-camp system that doubles as a system of government.

I AM not going here into why industrial capitalism, the first and only system of production that has wrested people from penury and that could perform the same service for those still experiencing penury, is the most decried. Nor will I waste time arguing at length that since the 18th century, the nations where industrial capitalism has developed also happen to be those where modern democracy took root. This does not mean that these countries have kept consistent faith with democracy, or that democracy is found wherever capitalism goes. But it does mean that two centuries of history are witness to a general concomitance between capitalism and democracy. I will only note that this monumental file of evidence has been filched and that the democracies themselves have adopted the Communists' image of the world and their perspective on history.

The falsest and most pernicious characteristic of this image and this perspective lies probably in the antithesis between socialism and capitalism, between totalitarianism and democracy. This functions in most minds as an interpretive grid, even for those opposed to socialism. Its imposition is not the least of disinformation's victories, for this disinformation no longer bears on events, but on ideas; it is philosophical disinformation, a sort of ideological mole that has burrowed into the understanding most of us have of these forces.

Adopting this grid means accepting the principle that any regime that is less than perfectly

democratic may be likened to totalitarianism and so loses its right to defend itself against Communism. Since the world is full of governments that are neither totalitarian nor democratic, their futures are sealed. For one thing, because none of the democracies, even those recognized as such, is perfect, and since there are oppressive features to any society, which regime can claim a genuine right to defend itself against Communism? None. And, following the same line of reasoning, if all that need be done to legitimize Communism is to show that capitalism has its faults, its vices and crises, then let world power be turned over to the Communists at once, on the principle that the best way to correct a limp is to cut off both legs.

The real antithesis is not that of totalitarianism to democracy or Communism to capitalism, but of totalitarian Communism to all the rest. Communism is a necrosis of economics, totalitarianism a necrosis of politics, of the body civic and of culture. As a dead society, totalitarianism can be contrasted with countless social forms now and in the past that cannot be called democratic as the term is understood in a few societies today, but which were not and are not dead, either. Medieval Europe, Ming China, African, Polynesian, and American societies before their contact with Europeans, the France of Louis XV and Napoleon III, Elizabethan England, the Spain of Philip IV, India under the Gupta dynasty and the Germany of Kant's day were neither democratic nor totalitarian, but they were all living societies that, each in its own way, created valuable civilizations.

The existence of injustice, persecution, oppression in a group is one thing; for a group to be a negation of human nature in *every* aspect of its structure and ideology is something else again. This is the group to which totalitarianism belongs. True, today we believe that to fulfill themselves, all societies should aspire to democracy, progress toward it, and finally achieve it. I certainly do. Nevertheless, thousands of social organizations down through history, while not comparable to modern democracies, were not negations of humanity and did contribute elements of civilization to our present patchwork culture.

Unlike capitalism, Communism is not an economic system, it is a political system that must necessarily asphyxiate an economy. We should therefore refuse to lump Communism in with other authoritarian systems or them with it. Totalitarianism endangers not democracy alone, but life itself. Communism is not simply one despotic political system among many, or one inefficient and unjust economic system among others. In normal life, despotism and inefficiency are among the rare qualities that can be corrected, as is shown by all of history—except the history of Communism. To survive, Communism seeks to destroy not just existing democracy, but every possibility of democracy.

Any society of any type in the world today can accede to democracy, with a single exception: Communist society, which cannot go democratic without destroying itself. Understandably, then, totalitarian strategists try to reverse or block this tendency in the still malleable world around them. What is less easy to understand is that they can recruit some of their assiduous disciples from among democracy's guides and thinkers.

**B**UT recruit them they do. Broad sectors of public opinion and of the West's political and cultural elite see the democracies as more reactionary, more damaging to the Third World, more aggressive militarily, especially as regards nuclear warfare, than the Soviet Union and its satellites. Westerners who favor an effective nuclear deterrent and a verifiable balance of forces are still viewed as "conservatives," "right-wingers," "warmongers," or, at best, as "cold warriors." Those "liberals" advocating unilateral disarmament or, at any rate, prior and increasingly juicier concessions to the Soviet Union without reciprocal guarantees are considered generous souls who love peace.

In practice, what these "liberals" are really promoting is an imbalance that would enable the Soviet Union to force its economic and political will on a growing number of countries without going to war, thus enlarging an already spacious orbit. For history teaches us that never, anywhere, have concessions coaxed the Soviet Union into making concessions. From this unhappy truth, for which they are in no way responsible, the democracies do not conclude that they must change their diplomatic approach, but that they must concede still more.

Indeed, anyone with his ear to the political ground might think the only danger to the West is Western arms and Western diplomacy. For example, the *New York Times* of April 2, 1983 announced that "An Adverse Impact Among Allies Is Feared After Reagan Remark on Soviet Superiority." That is, the real danger to America's European allies is not seen as possible Soviet military superiority but in America's plan to counter it by reinforcing West European defenses. Any President of the United States visiting Western Europe has been treated to demonstrations so hostile that an unsuspecting spectator would think he were the worst enemy Europe ever had.

True, the people often show better judgment than the elites and the activists. In 1982, a survey revealed that all the peoples of Western Europe except the Spanish thought the growth of the Soviet military potential was more important in explaining international tension than the growth of America's military potential. (This had its clownish side, however: by a margin of 45 percent to 21 percent, the French people believed that American interest rates and the dollar's role in

international finance were much more serious causes of tension than the USSR's bulging arsenal.)

Despite an improved and, by 1981, clearer perception of Soviet power, or perhaps because of the realism of that perception, most Europeans, and not just militant pacifists, said that if their countries were invaded, they would rather submit than resist. Asked in another poll, "If the Soviet army entered French territory, do you think the President of France should immediately open peace talks with the Soviet Union?" 63 percent of the French answered "yes," 7 percent favored the use of nuclear weapons, and 31 percent thought France should fight, but without using its nuclear missiles.

Now, one may very well prefer servitude to death. But we can also avoid putting ourselves in a situation in which that grim choice is all that is open to us. Yet the will to avoid such a situation is precisely what the West seems to lack. The relentless Soviet "peace offensive," therefore, has every chance of succeeding, that is, of persuading the West and the rest of the world to accept permanent military inferiority by portraying this as an absolute guarantee against war.

Any normal person naturally hates the idea of war, and, of course, this feeling interferes with proper public information about strategy, as though the information itself were dangerous. But a Soviet "peace" is synonymous with subjugation, for which the West is already being psychologically conditioned, and its continued pursuit will lead by imperceptible stages to a state of undeclared but total satellization. Even economic weapons, not to mention military deterrence, have been forbidden to the West, or rather, the West has forbidden itself to use them. This refusal to apply stern economic sanctions against the Soviet Union must have vastly reassured the men in the Kremlin. And if the West can no longer resort to a credible strategic deterrent or to economic weapons, what is there to prevent the Soviet Union from continuing to trample the sovereignty of other countries, other continents, the whole world?

The practical conclusion Communist leaders draw from Western military and economic passivity is that they can go right on doing what they have been doing. Jean-François Deniau, a former cabinet minister under Giscard d'Estaing, quoted a high Soviet official as having told him:

We took Angola and you did not protest. We even saw that you could have beaten us in Angola—the government was on our side, but it was within an ace of giving up—and that you did nothing to win; on the contrary. And when, to save ourselves, we sent in 30,000 Cuban soldiers, Ambassador Andrew Young, a member of the American cabinet, said it was a positive step and an element of stability. All right, we noted the fact and included it in our analyses. Then we took Mozambique. Forget it, you don't even know where it is. Then we took Ethiopia, a key move. There again we noted that you could have

replied via Somalia or Eritrea or both. No reply. We noted that and put it into our analyses. Then we took Aden and set up a powerful Soviet base there. Aden! On the Arabian peninsula! In the heart of your supply center! No response. So we noted: we can take Aden.

THROUGHOUT the course of relations between the Communist and democratic worlds, the question of which will destroy the other has always been obscured in the democratic camp by adventitious side issues. Communism's leaders have never concealed their belief that this is the only question that counts and that they are determined to answer it with a total Communist victory. No temporary compromise, they feel, can alter the final judgment of history.

If people in the West find it hard to bear this vision of merciless struggle between the two forms of society, if they sometimes drive it out of their minds, it is partly because the socialist cause was forged within the democracies themselves in the 19th century, was one of their offspring that then became an independent component of political life. We have trouble understanding that this offspring's heir presumptive, 20th-century Communism, has assumed the historical mission of destroying the democracy from which it issued. We persist in viewing it as just another political persuasion that may have degenerated, but which can mend its ways, calm down, participate someday in a global concert. To think otherwise, we feel, sins against tolerance. Unfortunately, the democracies are not making the rules in this game. The Communists in no way share their concern for tolerance and the coexistence of systems.

Communism considers itself permanently at war with the rest of the world, even if it must occasionally agree to an armistice. This is nothing to be indignant about. We must simply recognize it; unless we do, we obviously cannot begin taking suitable political countermeasures. The Communists' war is fought in many ways. If necessary, this includes military action, but to Communism's leaders, all forms of action are part of this war, beginning with negotiation, at least their very particular notion of negotiation.

In their minds, the aim of negotiation has never been to reach a lasting agreement, but to weaken their adversary and prepare him to make further concessions while fostering his illusion that the new concessions will be the last, the ones that will bring him stability, security, tranquillity. The Soviets' "peace" propaganda, which to them means convincing others not to defend themselves, always overlies a threat of war, of implicit intimidation that exploits our very justifiable fear of an atomic cataclysm. This belligerent demand for peace merely summons the democracies to buy their security with slavery; it is an elaborate way to say "surrender or be wiped out." It has been called "attack through pacifism."

Because in its social system, as in its foreign policy, Communism is meeting increasing disapproval, Communist leaders do not rely much any more on honey to catch their future victims (except, perhaps, in some badly informed Third World countries). Having given up trying to seduce the unwary by pretending to represent leftist ideals, they are stripping off their mask and using pure force. Unlike the Western leadership, which is tormented by remorse and a sense of guilt, the Soviet leaders have perfectly clear consciences, which allows them to use brute force with utter serenity both to preserve their power at home and to extend it abroad.

Many in the West take comfort from the internal weaknesses of Communism—especially its economic inefficiency. But I for one am more frightened than comforted by these weaknesses. A system that has grown so strong despite so many failings, that increasingly dominates the world even when no one wants anything to do with it, at least not the majority of the people in the countries it seeks to penetrate, and that, where it is in power, everyone except the *nomenklatura* longs to be rid of—this system must nevertheless embody a principle of action and a monopolization of power more effective than any mankind has ever known before. Communism and the Soviet empire are unprecedented in history. None of the classic concepts that make the past intelligible explains Communist imperialism. The Soviet empire does not follow the bell-shaped expansionist curve of previous empires. Yet the democracies persist in believing that it will decline of itself and inevitably grow more moderate.

The truth is, however, that *the longer Soviet Communism lasts, the more expansionist it becomes* and the more difficult it is to control. Other Communist states, notably Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea, have shown similar propensities for conquest. It does not follow that because Communism is showing signs of rot and suffers reverses, it will turn to the path of peace. Except when they were disintegrating, few other empires had to deal with as many national and popular rebellions as the Soviet empire has had since 1953. But *it* has withstood and quelled them without going to pieces. And these difficulties have in no way slowed its expansionist thrust.

Frequently, part or all of a Soviet ruler's reign is scarred by serious setbacks. This happened under Stalin from 1925 to 1935, it happened during the reign of Khrushchev, who for a while seemed to be digging the empire's grave, and in the years immediately following his fall: the break with China, the loss of Albania, North Korean and Vietnamese neutrality in the Moscow-Peking quarrel, insurrections in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, Rumania's new standoffishness, cracks in the monolithic Communist International. Yet never did the empire expand so much or so boost its military

power as in the years that followed this critical period.

The closer we get to the end of the century, the more Communist imperialism becomes the chief problem of our time. No other threat to world freedom has endured as long. Other totalitarian systems were defeated or simply crumbled with age. In many other unhappy countries that have been or still are ruled by dictators, democracy and dictatorship—or, at least, adulterated forms of dictatorship (and democracy)—have swept in and out like tides. Only Communist totalitarianism is both durable and immutable.

TO THE question of what should the non-Communist countries do, I am tempted to answer by turning to Demosthenes. "Some people," he said, "think they can stump the man who mounts the tribune by asking him what's to be done. To those I will give what I believe is the fairest and truest answer: don't do what you are doing now."

This is not as summary an answer as it seems, even to today's problems. What, indeed, *can* we do? To go on as we have been doing would guarantee the continued advance of totalitarianism, for, as experience has shown, it will not be stopped by its own weaknesses and internal failures.

A second option is based on the hope that the Soviet Union will change its ways voluntarily if we acknowledge its place in the sun and show clearly through concessions that we have no intention of attacking it. Anchored to peaceful coexistence and détente, this option has too adequately proved its harmfulness to warrant further discussion. But since we have yet to scrap it, I can only warn people not to count on it to save us. It will keep us out of war by ushering us into subordination or slavery.

A third choice proposed, reviving—horrors!—the "cold war," which we are so repeatedly admonished not to do, really does not exist, since there has never been a cold war. What is called the cold war has simply been a toned-down version of détente that has certainly not attained its theoretical goal of "containment." The democracies selfishly thought to use détente to guarantee their own security by signing treaties finally and officially confirming the subjugation of the peoples already under Communist dictatorship. In this they have failed. All we have succeeded in doing is abandoning these enslaved peoples to their masters. As he was being exchanged for a Chilean Communist, the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky found a cruel symbol of this complicity: "The Chekist [secret policeman] who took off my handcuffs, remarked for my edification, 'These handcuffs, incidentally—they're American.' And he showed me the stamp. As though I had waited this long to learn that since the Soviets took power, or just about, the West has been supplying us with handcuffs, literally and figuratively."

Yet this complicity has not brought us the security we expected from it. Never were the democracies more vulnerable, more baffled, more exposed to the blows of Communist imperialism than they were when the so-called détente period ended. The years since 1981 have been especially tragic, with confusion sown in the democratic camp by the Polish and Afghan affairs, by the democracies' gradual but irresistible acceptance of Soviet military superiority despite the more and more threatening, impudently biting, and brutal way the Kremlin talks to them.

Some responsible thinkers are pessimistic enough to believe that the West has become so docile that it can no longer call a halt without risking war. I have reached the opposite conclusion. I am convinced that the Soviets are intent on maintaining their nuclear superiority over Western Europe as a way to increase their pressure on us *without* being dragged into a general war while gradually disengaging the United States from the continent of Europe. Thus the Western nuclear deterrent remains the principal guarantor of peace it has proved to be for the past thirty-five years. The *nomenklatura* doesn't want to die either.

Once this first point is well understood, and

acted upon, the second article of a worthy foreign policy would be to reply to any Soviet encroachment with immediate reprisals, mainly economic, and to make no further concessions without manifest, equivalent, and palpable counterconcessions. The free world's revised foreign policy must and can have a precise objective: to make the Soviets understand once and for all that the irrevocable prior condition for resumption of negotiations and the granting of concessions of any kind is a definitive halt to Communist imperialism everywhere in the world.

Activating this new policy, which really would be no more than a return to normal diplomacy, presupposes an almost total Western intellectual reconversion, sound understanding—at last—of what Communism is and how it works, and a hitherto unprecedented harmonization and coordination of policy among all the democracies. This amounts to saying that while such a new diplomatic departure appears objectively possible, it seems to me highly unlikely because of the intellectual frivolity, indecisiveness, and discord of the men called on to apply it. And that is why I fear that democracy may not survive the closing years of the 20th century.

# The Media and the Middle East

*Daniel Pipes*

The task of the historian is often not to ascertain what the press says, but to go behind the face of the returns and to determine why it says what it says, when it says it, and what is the effect of what it has said.

—LUCY MAYNARD SALMON, *The Newspaper and the Historian* (1923)

AMERICAN press coverage of the 1982 war in Lebanon rightly provoked a storm of criticism. As a variety of analysts have shown, many errors were made in the reporting of facts, and anti-Israel bias was rampant. But falsehood and prejudice, if they were the outstanding media problems in 1982, are not usually the main source of inaccuracy regarding the Middle East. That arises out of the subject matter chosen for coverage.

Put simply, American journalists are interested in only two topics in the Middle East: Israel and the United States. Whatever takes place that is related to these countries is amplified and broadcast to the world; whatever does not is virtually ignored.\*

A few statistics will serve to make the point. Taking news coverage by ABC, CBS, and NBC from 1972 to 1980, we find that the average number of minutes per year devoted to Israel was 98.4. In contrast, Egypt received only 54.7 minutes, the PLO 42.4, Syria 25.7, Lebanon 18.4, Saudi Arabia 12.7, Jordan 8.5, and Iraq 7.2. As for the United States in the Middle East, the average coverage over the nine years was 152.7 minutes while coverage of the Soviet Union was limited to 19.4 minutes and of Europe to 13.

Media fascination with the U.S. shows up most dramatically in the case of Iran. From 1972 to 1978 Iran's presence on the network news came to a mere 9.6 minutes a year; then in 1979-80 the hostage crisis caused interest in Iran to jump 39 times, to 375.2 minutes. As William C. Adams, the author

of a study from which these figures derive, concludes:

Overall, the stress on the Arab-Israeli conflict has skewed Middle East news away from the parts of the region that are not contiguous to Israel. At the same time, emphasis on the U.S. policy and its role has skewed news away from the relations of the world to the Middle East. . . . Until the events in Afghanistan and Iran in 1979 and 1980, Middle East news was mostly about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the U.S. role in the region.

This preoccupation with just two parts of a much larger whole gives rise to an extreme narrowness of vision, which in turn accounts for the great number of distortions and mistakes of American journalism with regard to the Middle East.

## II

DESPITE Israel's small size and great distance, Americans know more about its political life than about any other foreign country. More of Israel's leaders, for example, are familiar by name in the United States than those of any other government, including Great Britain and the USSR. Many Americans can converse with facility about the latest developments in Israel's conflict with the Arabs or can articulate specific views on current Israeli policy. In brief, Israel has what may be termed the highest per-capita fame quotient in the world. (India has perhaps the lowest.) No other country of comparable size—Benin, Laos, Norway, Paraguay—commands even a fraction of Israel's familiarity in the U.S.

This intimacy is to a great extent the result of the special interest taken in Israel by the press. American news organizations have more correspondents in Israel than in any other foreign country except Great Britain. Nothing concerning Israel, it seems, is too small for coverage in the U.S.; and anything can make headlines. In addition to the major events that occur with stunning regu-

DANIEL PIPES is a lecturer on history at Harvard University and the author of *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (Basic Books). He delivered a slightly different version of the present article at a conference, "Perceptions of Israel in the American Mass Media," co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee's Institute of American Jewish-Israeli Relations and the Israel-Diaspora Institute at Tel Aviv University, and held in New York in April.

\* The better newspapers and educational radio do make more information available. But in this essay I am focusing on the most prominent coverage: front pages of dailies, cover stories of newsweeklies, the television evening news, the hourly news on radio.

larity—warfare, terrorism, UN resolutions, and the like—many features of daily life, when they take place in Israel, hold international attention. From which other small country does the rate of inflation or land-settlement policy get reported so often and with such prominence? Even the most minor events, of the sort usually ignored by the American press—a doctors' strike or municipal frictions between religious and nonreligious factions—are of interest in the case of Israel.

The same holds on the international level. During the Falkland Islands crisis of 1982, newspaper stories appeared on Israel's arms sales to Argentina. Israel's supplying of weapons to Iran is also a constant topic. Liberia, when it restored full relations with Israel in 1983, caught the attention of a press which had hitherto ignored it altogether. Simply put, Israel and everything associated with it is newsworthy.

To be sure, consistent and in-depth reportage about Israel is in and of itself commendable. Americans are in general too little exposed to the world beyond their borders, and coverage of Israel does, to a degree, help to remedy this deficiency. Indeed, Israel's circumstances are so different from America's—from its small size and its position among aggressive neighbors to its multilingual culture and 200-percent inflation rate—that learning about Israel willy-nilly educates Americans about much else in the world.

But there are costs as well. The emphasis on Israel fundamentally distorts the way Americans perceive the Middle East and makes it harder rather than easier to comprehend developments between Israel and the Arabs.

To begin with, the extraordinary prominence given to things Israeli conveys the impression that Israel is the key factor in all aspects of Middle East politics. Whatever the issue—oil prices, Persian Gulf security, U.S. and Soviet relations with the Arabs—Israel always seems to have a lead role. Not only does this downplay other important factors, such as Islam and pan-Arabism, but it also narrows the complexity of Middle East politics to a single dimension. The truth is that Israel does *not* account for the volatility of Arab politics, the anti-Western policies of OPEC, the Iraq-Iran war, the civil war in Lebanon, or the pro-Soviet alignment of the Syrian government. Were not the media so preoccupied with Israel, Americans would have a more correct and balanced view of its role in the Middle East.

A second distortion follows, somewhat paradoxically, from the first: since what concerns Israel gets reported in banner headlines, and what does not is at best buried in the back pages, Americans tend to miss the extent to which Israel's political problems are typical of the Middle East. For example, almost every boundary in that part of the world, from Libya to Pakistan, from Turkey to Yemen, is either ill-defined or in dispute. Some of these boundary problems have led to war (such as

over Iraq's differences with Kuwait and Iran). But Americans tend to know only about Israel's border problems and do not realize that these fit into a pattern that recurs across the Middle East. As a result, Americans tend, mistakenly, to see Israel's case as unique.

Media preoccupation with Israel also leads to exaggerating the importance of one Arab actor, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Unlike the Arab states, which are integral nations with domestic policies and identities separate from Israel, the PLO is by nature bound to Israel. As the organization that exists to destroy Israel, its fate is inextricably tied to that of the Jewish state. As Israel's counter-ego, it too receives excessive coverage from the American media. The remarks of every minor Palestinian leader are noted with the same care given to those of minor Israeli political figures. Like Israel, the PLO is imagined to be more powerful than it really is because it is watched so closely.

For similar reasons, Palestinian refugees are accorded attention out of proportion to their numbers or distress. Long after other displaced peoples of a generation ago have disappeared from American consciousness—Crimean Turks, eastern Germans, Koreans, Indians, Pakistanis, Jews from Arab lands—the Palestinians remain vivid. In an era when much larger numbers of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Afghan, and Somali refugees are undergoing far worse tribulations, the preoccupation with Israel has led many observers wrongly to conclude that the Palestinians' circumstances are the most worthy of their attention.

Reporting on Israel's neighbors is skewed by the emphasis on their relations with Israel. Only a fraction of news about the political life of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt reaches the American audience, that fraction referring to Israel. For example, key issues in Egypt, such as the endemic economic problems, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and the looming population crisis, attract press attention largely insofar as they might affect relations with Israel. Anwar Sadat became a media star in the U.S. because he took the step to end the state of war with Israel; Hosni Mubarak remains obscure to Americans because he has taken no major initiative vis-à-vis Israel.

**I**F SEEING Egypt in terms of its relations with Israel does an injustice to its political life, this is even more the case with Lebanon. Civil war began in that country in April 1975 and continues to this day. It became a major topic in the American press only in 1978 when Israel launched an operation into southern Lebanon. Then attention lapsed again, to be resumed only with the second Israeli incursion in the summer of 1982. In terms of news, Lebanon is an appendage of Israel.

Coverage of massacres in Lebanon makes this point starkly. A number of massacres took place

during the years of civil war, some of them (such as at Tel al-Zataar and Damur) counting thousands of victims. These made only the slightest impression on the U.S. media; they were duly reported, but tended to get lost in the fog of claim and counter-claim. Awful things were taking place, but Americans hardly knew the nature of the conflict, much less the identity of the combatants or the reasons for their murderousness. Then came the killings at Sabra and Shatila, which dominated news coverage in the United States for weeks on end in September and October 1982, followed by discussion and controversy for months afterward. In this case, the media initiated major investigative reports into every detail of the deaths, tracked down the perpetrators, and speculated on the distribution of guilt.

What was the difference between earlier massacres and the one at Sabra and Shatila? Not the number of lives taken, or the brutality of the killers. Sabra and Shatila stood out because Israel was in some way implicated. Arabs butchering one another on their own is not newsworthy; Israel's presence turns the same occurrence into a media spectacular. Yet the neglect of earlier horrors and the total absorption with the massacre at Sabra and Shatila, as if it were *sui generis* and not one event in a long sequence, leads once again to distortion, and to a seriously mistaken view of Arab history and politics.

Obsession with Sabra and Shatila had a yet more disturbing effect. International coverage was so focused on Israel that anyone not paying close attention would have thought that Israeli soldiers had perpetrated the killings (though their culpability was in fact limited to giving the Phalangist militia access to Palestinian camps and then not intervening to stop them). In the succeeding months, American attention followed the Israeli commission of inquiry, not its desultory and inconclusive Lebanese counterpart, further confirming the impression that Israel alone deserved to be in the dock. Lebanese had killed Palestinians, and American public opinion condemned Israelis. In this case, overemphasis on Israel caused the very record of what had happened to be falsified.

**F**INALLY, Israel's overexposure leads to its being held to impossible moral standards. Israelis themselves, of course, accept the same standards as the Western democracies and also aspire to live up to the moral code contained in the Jewish religion. Moreover, as major beneficiaries of U.S. aid, Israelis must and do accept the demanding criteria Americans apply to their allies. This much is fair. But for the media Israel looms so large, and its enemies so small, that it is judged not in relation to them or other states but in relation to abstract ideals. The rest of the world is seen in the context of its time and place; Israel is viewed in isolation.

Examples are not hard to find. Almost no jour-

nalists analyzing Israeli rule on the West Bank include information in their reports about Jordanian rule there from 1948 to 1967, nor do they offer comparisons with other parts of the Arab world. Although a proper assessment of Israeli governance of Arabs must take the Arab record into account, media preoccupation with Israel effaces the Arab presence, and thus removes today's West Bank situation from all considerations of time and place.

Similarly, Israel's military actions are often judged without regard to the actions of its enemies. During the siege of Beirut in the summer of 1982, many American journalists excoriated Israel for killing innocent Beirutis; but they usually neglected to note that civilians had been exposed to danger in the first place by the PLO strategy of using the population of Beirut as hostages to protect them from an Israeli onslaught. Discussions of PLO morality have never caught American interest as do discussions of Israeli morality; and if Israel's behavior is in the end found superior to that of its opponents, it hardly matters. The real test comes down to the discrepancy between Israel's actions and Israel's ideals, both of which make better copy than those of the Arabs.

In every one of these cases, media obsession with Israel severely impairs the American understanding of Israel as well as of the other actors in the Middle East. Israel is not, in fact, the key to regional issues; the PLO has little scope for independent action; the importance of Egypt goes well beyond its relationship with Israel; Sabra and Shatila were not a novel event in Lebanon; the killings there were committed by Lebanese and not by Israeli soldiers; and final responsibility for the siege of Beirut lies with the PLO. So stated, these assertions appear obvious, yet too often they have become lost in the barrage of attention paid to Israel and to Israel virtually alone.

### III

**W**HAT explains Israel's newsworthiness? It derives in part from the fact that Israel is the major American ally in an ongoing, dramatic, and momentous regional conflict. In this sense, Israel can be compared with South Vietnam, which in its time also suffered from excessive press scrutiny—and which was also judged according to abstract moral principles, not in relation to its enemy. But Israel exercises a fascination of its own that goes beyond its position as a major U.S. ally. Even developments that hardly touch on the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the shutdown of El Al or disputes over archeology, make news abroad, in a way that analogous information about South Vietnam never did, or analogous information about Egypt, Jordan, or Saudi Arabia still does not.

To comprehend this fascination requires stepping back from the flow of daily events and recalling some cultural facts. For both the American press and its consumers, the most important reason

for placing emphasis on Israel is the fact that it is the Jewish state.

Israel greatly concerns American Jews, who sense a connection between its destiny and their own, and also have an appetite for detailed information about the country and everything touching on it that probably has no parallel among other groups in the United States. The presence of large numbers of Jews in the media contributes further to the preoccupation with Israel, as does the fact that Jews are concentrated in the large cities where the major media are based—especially New York.

Even more important, however, is the inexhaustible fascination of Christians with Jews, deriving in roughly equal parts from theology and history. The fact that Christianity developed from Judaism has created an enduring tension between the two religions whose points of contact are many and intricate. Jesus was a Jew who rejected many Jewish practices; in turn, Jews rejected Jesus as the messiah. Christians often held Jews responsible for the death of Jesus and believed that the Second Coming of Christ awaited the conversion of all the Jews. Christians regard the Hebrew Bible as holy but read it differently from the Jews. For these and other reasons, Jews have a unique place in Christian theology and therefore too in Christian civilization. Over the centuries, what the Jews do has always been a topic of central interest to Christians.

History accentuated this interest. Through most of medieval and modern times, Jews were the only non-Christians most Europeans ever encountered. And they stood out: they dressed differently, practiced alien religious customs, and lived in separate communities. As a conspicuous religious minority with a crucial role in Christian theology, the Jews, up until the culminating Nazi assault on them, were always disproportionately prominent in Europe.

Two developments took place in recent times to modify this picture. First, the United States inherited, with certain modifications, the European interest in Jews. Second, Israel inherited the conspicuousness attached to the Jewish people of Europe. Yet whereas the Jews of Europe attracted attention by being different, the Jews of the Middle East, ironically, attract attention by being familiar. Israel, founded by settlers coming from Europe, is the most Western nation of its region. Consequently, to an American, it is the most comprehensible country in the Middle East. (The emerging Oriental majority in Israel does not change this, for the dominant political culture remains the one established by the pioneers early in the century.) The hopes and fears of Israelis are much more accessible to Americans than are those of their neighbors.

The relative familiarity of Israel makes all the more difference to journalists lacking expertise in the Middle East. The media are no exception to the general rule that American institutions cultivate generalists. An employee rises in his organization

by rotating frequently and showing ability at many jobs. Accordingly, American reporters sent to the Middle East are invariably new to the subject and to the culture of the area they are to cover. The familiarity of Israel, in contrast to the alien quality of Muslim life, makes the Jewish state all the more alluring; here is one country journalists feel they can understand.

Also, Israel has the only democratic government and open society in the Middle East; as such, it provides the international media with opportunities not available elsewhere. (Lebanon's government has been more or less democratic, depending on circumstances; the press could act freely, within the bounds set by the Syrian government and the PLO.) Israeli journalists, being themselves independent-minded and active, provide their American colleagues with many ideas for reports. Because many American journalists are lazy when it comes to pursuing all sides of the Middle East conflict, they concentrate on Israeli matters. In the Arab states (sometimes known to journalists as "the arc of silence"), they are normally under stringent state control. The Syrian government of Hafez al-Assad could devastate one of its own cities, Hama, without a photograph getting out. In Saudi Arabia, secrecy about the royal family prompted one U.S. embassy official to claim that "Learning the arcane language of the wall posters in Peking, or quantifying the May Day pictures in Moscow to see who's in and who's out—that stuff is lots easier work than Saudi Arabia." Years after it took place, the takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca in November 1979 remains an enigma. Who were those people and what did they hope to achieve? Accounts of the event ascribe it to everyone from Marxists to Islamic fundamentalists. Facts are elusive in the Arab states, especially for those who are unfamiliar with the language and culture.

For all these reasons and more—the drama of its birth, the resurrection of Hebrew, the ingathering of Jews from around the world, the age-old religious associations of the land—Israel commands disproportionate attention from the American media.

#### IV

THE second focus of U.S. media interest—the United States itself—requires little explanation. Americans have huge economic, political, and military interests in the Middle East. Energy companies do business in most countries of the area and their petroleum equipment is nearly ubiquitous. About three-quarters of all U.S. foreign aid goes to just three Middle East countries, Turkey, Israel, and Egypt. American institutions of higher learning are located in Istanbul, Beirut, and Cairo. Huge quantities of U.S. weapons have gone since 1971 to Israel, its neighbors, and the Persian Gulf region. A central command was set

up in 1980 to coordinate U.S. rapid-strike forces in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean areas. Strategic-cooperation agreements were signed with Israel in 1981 and 1983. U.S. Marines and the ships and planes to protect them were in Lebanon from 1982 until recently.

The presence of a home team far away from home distorts the way U.S. journalists cover the Middle East. They pursue their country's interests in a way that, say, Canadian journalists cannot do for Canada. Problems arise when the U.S. angle comes to dominate; Americans find it more interesting to read about themselves than about foreigners. It is fearfully easy for them to lose track of the larger question in favor of the U.S. role. Journalists are the first to fall into this trap.

For example, when American journalists were polled on the biggest news story of 1983, they chose by a wide margin the October 23 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut that left 241 dead. This makes sense from an American perspective: it *was* the largest single loss of life by the U.S. military since the Vietnam war. But from a Middle Eastern viewpoint, it is a startling choice. The Marine bombing, however tragic, caused just a few more deaths in a civil war that has lasted nine years. The deaths were significant only to the degree they shook U.S. resolve to retain ground troops in Lebanon. American journalists were far less interested in stories that did not touch on the U.S., even if they were much more important to the Middle East—the peaceful transition to democracy in Turkey, the failure of the national reconciliation talks in Lebanon, the resignation of Prime Minister Begin in Israel, the Arafat-Mubarak meeting in Egypt, King Hussein's refusal of the Reagan plan, the break-up of the PLO, the placement of the SA-5's and Soviet technicians in Syria, to mention just a few.

When American journalists concentrate on their country's direct involvement, they encourage the rest of the country to do likewise. This causes two problems. First, international arguments become domesticated. What begin as disagreements between the U.S. and foreign governments end up as intramural squabbles. After the Marines took on an active role in Lebanon in September 1983, the main question in the U.S. came to center on their deployment. With every soldier's death, the internal debate (over the War Powers Resolution and related matters) took on greater importance and the international questions receded. Within a few months the Lebanese ambassador to the United States, Abdallah Bouhabib, noted with despair that American leaders had become "only interested in discussing the Marine issue. They don't discuss Lebanon anymore: national reconciliation, strengthening the government. . . . The issue has become just the Marines, not Lebanon." Turning Middle East issues into domestic debates hobbles U.S. efforts to formulate an effective policy; as Americans pay less atten-

tion to ends and more to means, the fewer the goals they attain.

Secondly, focus on the U.S. means seeing Middle East developments through the prism of American interests. From January 1978 to January 1981, the press seriously misled its audience by portraying events in Iran in light of the U.S. involvement there. As the Shah's regime tottered, the safety of American citizens living in Iran became a first concern. Then the effect of the Shah's fall was assessed in terms of American business, American military capabilities, American relations with the USSR, and oil prices in the U.S. The press also debated at length the role of the U.S. government in the Shah's regime and what Washington could have done to prevent his fall. Whatever Iranians did, U.S. interests always remained in the foreground.

Seizure of the U.S. embassy in Teheran in November 1979 then pushed all other issues in Iran to the side. For fifteen months, the hostage story dominated every aspect of reporting from Iran. Worse than the excessive attention to such matters as who saw the hostages and what food they ate on Christmas was the tendency of the U.S. media to present everything happening in Iran as revolving around the hostage issue. The embassy drama, which was a symptom (and not a cause) of a great struggle for power in Teheran, was seen by Americans as an end in itself—indeed, as the central issue of Iranian politics. Direct American involvement led in this case, and not for the first time, to a profoundly wrong understanding of events in the Middle East.

THE opposite pitfall is just as dangerous. Should Americans not be directly involved in an issue, it disappears from the press. The Iraq-Iran war and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are two long-lasting conflicts taking place in the absence of U.S. military participation or even a major U.S. diplomatic role. Predictably, both have been neglected by the American press. In terms of lives lost, the war between Iraq and Iran is by now probably the fourth most costly of the 20th century (following the two world wars and the Indochina conflict). Iranian leaders threaten to blockade oil exports from the Persian Gulf, which would lead to a shortfall of several million barrels of oil a day on the world market. But lives lost and oil security are remote when the U.S. is not involved; newspapers report the war so perfunctorily (usually nothing more than cursory accounts of casualties in obscure towns) that even the most devoted readers lose interest. As for Afghanistan, American journalists did flock there right after the Soviet invasion, in part perhaps because they anticipated a direct U.S. role; when that did not materialize, the press lost interest in the story of villagers fighting Soviet troops.

Difficulties of access to the fighting in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan do not explain this paucity of

news. When journalists take an interest in an issue they are not deterred by government restrictions. In Iran, for instance, after U.S. reporters were expelled in the third month of the hostage crisis, the U.S. media maintained coverage almost without interruption by relying on non-U.S. citizens. And in Afghanistan, for anyone determined to cover the war, there is the route by foot from Pakistan. The level of American interest in these two conflicts would probably remain about the same were an ally like France to back the Iraqi regime militarily or airlift weapons to the Afghan rebels. But if the U.S. took either of these steps, interest would soar—showing once again that the fact of U.S. involvement is more newsworthy than the reason for the involvement.

## V

THE role of the U.S. media in shaping American public opinion and in influencing Washington's policies needs little elaboration, but their impact outside the country is less well known. To a great extent, they set the agenda for the rest of the world. What the British or Japanese report does become news in a few other countries, but for an event to attain international prominence it must be reported by the major U.S. press organizations. News stories, no less than sopranos, have to make it in New York. No matter what the provenance, an American seal turns a story into a world-class event.

Thus, the Teheran embassy seizure made headlines everywhere because it was so heavily reported in the United States. In Iran itself, the embassy occupation took on a much larger significance because of U.S. attention. By contrast, when 66 Czechoslovaks were captured by UNITA forces in Angola in March 1983, press coverage outside

Czechoslovakia was virtually nil. When asked about the contrast with the attention paid the U.S. hostages, the foreign editor of Czechoslovakia's leading paper grumbled about "the egocentrism of the American mass media" and noted that a single American captive constitutes a major story, "but not when 66 Czechs are held hostage. We felt that if the international press were more active, [UNITA] would have released the hostages much sooner."

The whole world is influenced by the way the American press reports the Middle East. Overemphasis on Israel and the United States spreads to other regions too. Even the Chinese—who have no historic interest in Israel and who are more concerned about Soviet actions than American ones—tend to dwell on Israel and the U.S. The peoples of the Middle East themselves, whom one would expect to have their own views of regional affairs, are deeply influenced by their exposure to the American media; they too dwell on the same two topics.

In this way the media do not just report Middle East news, they also create it. Weeks of attention to Sabra and Shatila exacerbated a crisis for the government of Israel. The paucity of attention to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has helped to doom the resistance forces there. The twin preoccupations of the American press have turned the attention of the U.S., its allies, and its friends from great matters to small ones, and this has had many harmful effects.

For the historian of the Middle East, much of what the media find significant must be discounted. The historian can discern a rough draft among the materials journalists make available, but must carefully ignore their emphases and interpretations, which so often turn out to be misguided, or worse.

# "Julia" & Other Fictions by Lillian Hellman

Samuel McCracken

IN FEBRUARY 1980, Lillian Hellman brought a libel action against Mary McCarthy. Miss McCarthy, appearing on the *Dick Cavett Show*, had called Miss Hellman a bad and dishonest writer, and had then repeated on television a judgment she had made earlier in an interview: "Every word she writes is a lie including 'and' and 'the.'"

Whether this statement constitutes a libel is properly a concern for the courts. But quite apart from the libel action, which may anyway never come to trial, the incident raises a more general question, the question of the credibility of a very well-known and highly esteemed author. Lillian Hellman's memoirs have received adulatory notices and are taken as authoritative sources on the life not only of their author but of such prominent literary figures as Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, and the man with whom Miss Hellman lived, Dashiell Hammett. Moreover, Miss Hellman is widely credited with having set a heroic example when she appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities during the McCarthy period and announced, before taking the Fifth Amendment and refusing to answer a question, that she would not "cut [her] conscience to fit this year's fashion." It is, therefore, a question of some consequence whether Mary McCarthy is right about Miss Hellman's honesty.

The answer to this question is to be found in Miss Hellman's series of memoirs: *An Unfinished Woman* (1969), *Pentimento* (1973), *Scoundrel Time* (1976), *Three* (an annotated compendium of the earlier memoirs, 1979), and *Maybe* (1980).

The best known of these is undoubtedly *Pentimento*, which contains a portrait, "Julia," about a childhood friend. The heroine of this piece, a rich young American, attends Oxford and then the University of Vienna medical school; undergoes analysis at the hands of Sigmund Freud; becomes involved in anti-fascist underground work during the 30's; and at one point enlists Miss Hellman's aid in delivering money to the underground in

Germany. According to Miss Hellman, Julia had a daughter by one of her fellow students; also, as a result of her work, she had lost a leg. In 1938, fatally wounded by Nazis in Frankfurt, she is smuggled, dying, to London. After her death Miss Hellman receives a telegram from London asking her to advise a funeral home there as to the disposition of the body. In the event, Miss Hellman herself goes to London where she takes charge of the body, brings it back to America, and has it cremated after Julia's family refuses to accept it.

Miss Hellman fleshes out this outline with her customary taut prose, pungent detail, and barbed expressions of contempt for those actors in the story who fail to meet her moral standards. (I have greatly simplified the memoir here; Miss Hellman recounts in detail her lifelong acquaintance with Julia, and the complex interrelations between the life of Julia and that of another childhood friend.) In 1973, "Julia" was made into a film starring Jane Fonda as Lillian Hellman, Vanessa Redgrave as Julia, and Jason Robards, Jr. as Dashiell Hammett. All three were nominated for, and Miss Redgrave and Mr. Robards received, the Academy Award.

In 1981, Martha Gellhorn, the well-known reporter who was the second wife of Ernest Hemingway, published an article in the *Paris Review* severely critical of Miss Hellman's veracity. Although she dealt largely not with *Pentimento* but with *An Unfinished Woman* (in which Miss Gellhorn and Hemingway figure prominently), and thus did not confront "Julia" directly, she raised *en passant* grave doubts about the internal consistency of Miss Hellman's account of the travels which included the delivery of money to Julia. These I shall take up presently.

Then, in 1983, the psychoanalyst Muriel Gardiner published a memoir, *Code Name: "MARY,"* which disclosed startling similarities to the life story of Miss Hellman's Julia. Dr. Gardiner, like Julia, was born to wealth, enrolled at Oxford, and then traveled to Vienna in the 1920's where she attended the University of Vienna medical school and underwent analysis; like Julia, too, she became involved in anti-fascist underground work during the 1930's. The main differences between Dr. Gardiner and Miss Hellman's Julia are that Dr.

SAMUEL MCCrackEN is Assistant to the President of Boston University and the author of *The War Against the Atom*. Mr. McCracken wishes to thank Lynn Packard and Jeff Jacoby for their research assistance.

Gardiner failed to persuade Freud to undertake her analysis, did not lose a leg, and survived to tell the tale.

Dr. Gardiner reports that from the appearance of *Pentimento* in 1973, people began to make a connection between her and Julia. She says that she wrote Miss Hellman about the matter. Miss Hellman has stated that she does not remember getting the letter, and has flatly denied any connection between the two women. She also says she cannot, for legal reasons, announce the true identity of Julia.

TO ACCEPT the striking parallels between Muriel Gardiner and Julia as mere coincidence would require something like an act of faith. We must believe that all during the 1930's, one of Muriel Gardiner's fellow students in Vienna was, quite unknown to her, also at the center of the anti-Nazi resistance. Moreover, we must believe that this other freedom fighter escaped the notice of the documentation archives of the Austrian resistance—for Dr. Gardiner tells us that the director of those archives knows nothing of her presumed *Doppelgänger*. Indeed, he has taken pains to ask many survivors of the resistance whether they knew a second American woman, and the answer has always been "No. Only 'Mary.'"

But did Miss Hellman have access to information about Dr. Gardiner? Nothing about Dr. Gardiner's career was published until 1973, when her husband, the historian Joseph Buttinger, contributed a brief memoir to a professional journal. But as it happens, Wolf Schwabacher, a close friend of Dr. Gardiner and her husband, was for some years also Miss Hellman's attorney. Dr. Gardiner recounts that Schwabacher frequently told stories about Miss Hellman, and that he had been much interested in Dr. Gardiner's own work in the Austrian underground. Miss Hellman, for her part, denies that Schwabacher ever told her about Dr. Gardiner. Since he died in 1951, the issue cannot be finally resolved, but he must be considered a possible source through which Miss Hellman could have become aware of Dr. Gardiner's activities.

Miss Hellman's own account of Julia presents difficulties to an investigator. To begin with, she tells us she has changed "most" of the names.\* Her reason for changing Julia's name in particular is that Julia's mother is still alive. But Miss Hellman never mentions Julia's last name, so presumably what she means is not that she has changed it but that she has suppressed it. It is not clear why, however, since her contempt for Julia's family—"bastards all"—is close to uncompromised. We may in any event presume that Julia is a real name since we are told that Julia described Donne's poem "To Julia" as a "tribute" to her.

Another suppressed name is that of a heavy woman with whom Miss Hellman rode on a train from Paris to Berlin. Miss Hellman is protective of her because she thinks the woman still lives in Cologne, and she is not sure whether even now the

Germans like their premature anti-Nazis. This is rather an odd remark for two reasons: nothing in the account suggests that Miss Hellman ever had contact with this woman after leaving her in the train station in Berlin; and one would have thought, from the career of Willy Brandt alone, that the Germans are reasonably tolerant of their premature anti-Nazis.

Other names in *Pentimento* are equally elusive. Miss Hellman designates a "Moore's funeral home in Whitechapel Road," but the London telephone book for 1938 does not show a listing for such an establishment. Perhaps she means Smith's funeral home in Gray's Inn Road, or perhaps it does not matter, since she also tells us that in 1944 she visited the site of this establishment and found it flattened by enemy action. Likewise for the non-existence of a "Dr. Chester Lowe," said by Miss Hellman to have been in custody of Julia's body at 30 Downshire Hill; or for any named person in "Julia" other than those who, like Miss Hellman and Dashiell Hammett, are elsewhere attested.

But verification of Miss Hellman's account does not hang on names and streets. Much can be achieved by a close analysis of the text of "Julia" against the background in which it is set. Here the spadework has been done by Martha Gellhorn, who has demonstrated that there are very serious problems with the chronology of Miss Hellman's comings and goings in the fall of 1937. The discussion that follows is deeply indebted to Miss Gellhorn.

The *Normandie*, carrying Miss Hellman, Dorothy Parker and her husband Alan Campbell, as well as Miss Gellhorn, reached France on August 27, 1937. Miss Hellman tells us in one memoir that she spent three weeks, in another a month, in Paris before going to Moscow, where she was to attend a world theater festival. This means that her trip to Moscow cannot have begun earlier than the last week of September. The date is further nailed down by Miss Hellman's noting that she subsequently told Julia's grandmother that she had seen Julia in Berlin "in October," when she was on her way to Moscow. She tells us further that her trunk arrived in Moscow "two weeks" after leaving Berlin. October 1 is therefore a *terminus a quo* for Berlin, and she must have been in Moscow at least until October 15. She spent "several" weeks in Prague before returning to Paris. She was thus not back in Paris before the first of November; she spent "a few" days in Paris before proceeding to Spain.

ONE problem with all this is that in *An Unfinished Woman* Miss Hellman gives a detailed chronology for her activities in Spain, starting with October 13, a date on which she was presumably still in Moscow. It does not

\* In August 1983 I wrote Miss Hellman to ask which of the names were real and which pseudonymous. She has not answered.

seem likely that her memory is playing her false about the date of her arrival in Spain, since it is given in what is apparently a *verbatim* extract from her diary. Besides, Miss Gellhorn reports seeing Miss Hellman in Madrid on October 15.

There is a further difficulty with Miss Hellman's chronology. The world theater festival in Moscow, as Martha Gellhorn notes, ran from September 1 to September 10, 1937. It is a little hard to understand how Miss Hellman could have attended this event if she did not get under way for Moscow before October 1. Even if her memory of having seen Julia "in October" is a slip for "in September," she would not have been able to spend three weeks or a month in Paris and still have made the festival.

Moreover, Miss Hellman reports that the only play at the festival that impressed her was a production of *Hamlet*; according to Miss Gellhorn, there is no record of a production of this play in Moscow during 1937.

Miss Hellman could not, therefore, have carried out the entire program she describes in her memoirs in the time she said she had for it. Some of these events, if they happened at all, must have happened at times and in ways other than she says they did.

While Miss Hellman's account of how she actually occupied herself in Paris during the three to four weeks she says she spent there is extremely vague, her account of her trip from Paris to Moscow is extremely circumstantial. Let us see what we can make of it.

While in Paris, Miss Hellman talks on the telephone with Julia, and tells her that she will make a detour on the way to Moscow to see her in Vienna. Julia proposes instead a rendezvous in Berlin, the purpose of which will be explained by an emissary she will send in a few days. In due time, a man who calls himself Johann approaches Miss Hellman at her Paris hotel and tells her that Julia wants her to smuggle \$50,000 for the underground as she passes through Berlin on the way to Moscow. Johann is to meet Miss Hellman at the train station the next morning, and if she is willing to undertake the task she will say "hello" to him.

The next morning Miss Hellman arrives at the station in the unwanted company of Dorothy Parker and her husband, and after a *contretemps* in which Johann is nearly driven off, she conveys her willingness to carry the money. Once on the train, she meets a young man who says he is Johann's nephew. He presents her with a hatbox and a box of candy, saying that they are from "Miss Julia." There is a note from Julia attached to the hatbox, advising her that at the border crossing she should leave the candy box on the seat and wear the hat when she leaves the train to go through immigration control. Once the train is on its way, Miss Hellman realizes that she has no idea whether the border will come in a few minutes or a few hours.

In her compartment, Miss Hellman has found

two German women, one thin and one heavy. At lunch time, the heavy woman invites her to go to the restaurant car for lunch, and Miss Hellman demurs, saying that she doesn't know when they will be crossing the border. Assured that they will not reach the border until late afternoon, she goes off to lunch, where she learns that the heavy woman is a graduate student returning to her home in Cologne. When the border crossing is reached, the thin woman insists that Miss Hellman wear the hat. Once Miss Hellman has returned to the car, during which time there is a customs examination, the thin woman, over her protests, opens the box of candy, removes a piece, and eats it.

At the station in Berlin, where all three women leave the train, Miss Hellman is met by a man and woman; the woman greets her effusively, regretting that she cannot stay longer, but consoling herself that they will have a visit of a few hours. The woman then disappears and the man tells Miss Hellman to get a restaurant recommendation from the official at the gate, to go to the recommended restaurant but, should it not be Albert's, to proceed from the recommended restaurant to Albert's. At Albert's, Miss Hellman encounters Julia on crutches, minus a leg. She transfers the hat to Julia. After appropriate thanks, they talk, and Julia tells Miss Hellman—whose visa will not allow her to stay in Berlin overnight—to get her train at Bahnhof 200 (presumably a typographical error for Bahnhof Zoo). She will be shadowed by the underground to the station and then on the train to Warsaw; her unseen escort will be in the car to her left.

Miss Hellman boards the train, and in the morning, as the train pulls into Warsaw, she sees a figure gesturing at her from the platform; she recognizes the young man who had sat with her at dinner the night before. Shortly thereafter a voice—presumably that of the young man—speaking English from the corridor informs her that all is well but that the Germans have taken her trunk off the train; she should wait a few hours before inquiring about it, advice which Miss Hellman follows.

THIS narrative is shot through with improbabilities. The first of these is the mission itself. As Muriel Gardiner's memoir shows, it would have been perfectly easy for Julia to have money brought to her in Vienna by an open courier; Miss Hellman herself says that the Morgan Bank had been sending Julia large sums of money all over Europe. Why then the need to smuggle? And even if we grant that need, why could Julia not accept the money from Miss Hellman in Vienna rather than taking a trip north to Berlin? An underground operative on crutches, with a badly fitting false leg, is a sight easily marked. Why should Julia have involved herself so visibly in the exchange? Muriel Gardiner herself has said of this part of the story that it is so violative of

good underground practice as to be unbelievable.

Why is Miss Hellman sent as a courier on the same train with the thin woman and the heavy woman? Either of these two could have carried the money without involving Miss Hellman, about whose abilities as an operative Julia expresses open skepticism and whose destination of Moscow attracts attention to herself, restricting her to a transit visa in Berlin. And if the two women, as members of a resistance group, are subject to surveillance, why are *they* on the mission? Especially, why are two of them on the train, both exposing themselves to arrest when one would have served to nursemaid Miss Hellman? For the operation is certainly overstaffed: in addition to Julia herself, there are two people in Paris, two on the train, two waiting for Miss Hellman in Berlin, an unspecified number trailing Miss Hellman in Berlin, and the man on the train to Warsaw. Most of these could have been replaced with a single operative in Paris, bringing her the candy and the hatbox. Miss Hellman says that her instructions for the border crossing were conveyed to her in a note from Julia; this note could also have contained instructions for the Berlin rendezvous.

Other questions present themselves. Miss Hellman's uncertainty about when the train from Paris will reach the border is surprising in one who had lived for extended periods in Germany and France; could she have thought Berlin might be a suburb of Paris? If the heavier of the two women is on her way to Cologne, why does she stay on the train to Berlin, 250 miles beyond her stop? What is the significance of the box of candy, which makes repeated appearances but for no apparent reasons? When Miss Hellman is met in Berlin, why should her welcomers loudly announce that she will spend a few hours with them and then leave immediately after telling her to go straight to Julia? Why is the money transferred in public? Why does Julia tell Miss Hellman to take the train for Moscow at Bahnhof Zoo, requiring her to double back several miles to the west and use a small station, where she would be more conspicuous than at a large one? When Julia tells Miss Hellman that her escort will be in a car to the left, how can she know not only the order in which various carriages would be cut into the long train but also whether Miss Hellman's own carriage would be positioned with the corridor on the left or right?

To all these questions, one might answer that truth is stranger than fiction. But besides these internal inconsistencies and puzzlements there are a great many more involving Miss Hellman's other published work and the world of reality.

In the account of the Paris-Moscow trip given in *An Unfinished Woman*, Miss Hellman says that she had a five-hour layover in Berlin and that the Soviets sent a young consular officer to look after her during that period. This functionary simply disappears from the tale as told in *Pentimento*. In *An Unfinished Woman*, Miss Hellman tells us that

her trunk disappeared from the Berlin-Moscow train after the train left Germany. She records that the Polish conductor told her "I would receive it in Moscow, the Nazis were not barbarians, a mistake had been made, my name was German." The trunk did arrive in Moscow two weeks later, "the insides slashed to pieces, every book . . . torn apart, every bottle emptied."

There is an alternative version to all this in *Pentimento*. The Polish conductor's *sang-froid* is much less marked: "He was upset when he told me the German customs people had removed the trunk, that often happened, but he was sure it would be sent on to me in Moscow after a few days, nothing unusual, the German swine [non-barbarian swine, to be sure] often did it now." The damage list in Moscow is also different: "The lining was in shreds, the drawers broken, but only a camera was missing and four or five books."

THESE conflicts with Miss Hellman's other works, however, are as nothing compared with the problems Miss Hellman's account raises with external reality. Miss Hellman says that she took an "early morning" train from Paris. It is possible to be very precise about the facts of train service in Europe in the 30's, thanks to the monthly *Continental Railway Timetables* issued by Thomas Cook & Sons. In September and October of 1937, the only early morning train from Paris to Berlin left the Gare du Nord at eight. It was a comparatively slow train, and its Berlin carriages finally reached Berlin at 11:44 at night. There would actually have been no reason for Miss Hellman to take the eight o'clock train, because a later train, leaving at 10:10 A.M., also included Berlin carriages arriving at 11:44 P.M.

Miss Hellman says that the train crossed the German border in late afternoon; in reality the eight o'clock train arrived at Aachen at 2:34. Even the later train crossed the border in mid-afternoon, at 3:24. Nor was this the first border crossing of the journey. The only practical route between Berlin and Paris runs through Belgium (as General von Schlieffen and his successors on the Prussian general staff were acutely aware). Yet about crossing the Belgian frontier Miss Hellman is entirely silent. Indeed, she seems unaware that she has passed through Belgium, for at the crossing into Germany she is reassured to think that she is still near France.

Then there are the even greater difficulties with the trip from Berlin to Moscow. Miss Hellman tells us that she took the train at the Zoo station. But the trains from Berlin to Moscow did not stop at the Zoo station, calling rather at the Friedrichstrasse and Schlesien stations. Furthermore, the only evening train from Berlin to Moscow left Berlin at 5:43 from the Friedrichstrasse station and at 6:13 from the Schlesien station: Miss Hellman could not have taken this train on a day when she left Paris at eight and did not arrive in Berlin until 11:44 P.M. Yet she tells us plainly

not merely that she left Berlin at night, but that she was obliged to do so because her visa would not allow her to stay overnight, a point she mentions twice.

The only way Miss Hellman could have traveled from Paris to Moscow without stopping overnight in Berlin would have been by taking the Nord Express from Paris at 7:15 the preceding evening. But such a trip would have been entirely inconsistent with Miss Hellman's account of a daytime journey from Paris to Berlin. Moreover, the Nord Express spent a total of thirty-one minutes in Berlin, hardly enough time for Miss Hellman's purposes. Nor, after leaving Berlin, could she have awakened, as she says she did, in Warsaw the next morning, since the Nord Express reached Warsaw at 4:32 in the afternoon.

These minutiae, taken in sum, are not trivial. They cannot be explained away by a failing memory. What is more important, they are not mere corroborative detail, they are facts upon which Miss Hellman *insists*. Yet, when disproved, they shatter the credibility of her entire account. To the basic improbability that Miss Hellman knew a *Doppelgänger* of Muriel Gardiner is thus added the difficulty that her account of this trip rings false wherever it is struck. Almost every detail is either improbable to a degree that would disgrace a third-rate thriller, or plainly contradicted by the historical record.

THE narrative of her trip to Moscow is one key passage in Miss Hellman's story of Julia; the other key passage recounts Julia's death in May 1938 and Miss Hellman's journey to London to claim her body.

On May 23 she receives in New York a telegram from London:

Julia has been killed stop please advise Moore's funeral home Whitechapel Road London what disposition stop my sorrow for you for all of us.

The cable, signed John Watson, bears no address.

Miss Hellman's reaction to this is to get drunk for two days. On the third morning, she goes around to the home of Julia's grandparents, finds them out of the country, and engages the butler in an argument. That evening, Dashiell Hammett, who ordinarily does not like her to travel, persuades her to go to London to look into matters. Miss Hellman makes her way thither and proceeds to the funeral home, where Mr. Moore apologizes to her for his inability to cover the wounds on Julia's face, but remarks that the scars on the body are worse. She leaves for a brief time and when she returns the undertaker gives her a note:

Dear Miss Hellman,

We have counted on your coming but perhaps it is not possible for you, so I will send a carbon of this to your New York address. No one of us knows what disposition her family wishes to make, where they might want what should be a hero's funeral. It is your right to know that the

Nazis found her in Frankfurt, in the apartment of a colleague. We got her to London in the hope of saving her. Sorry that I cannot be here to help you. It is better that I take my sorrow for this wonderful woman into action and perhaps revenge. Yours, John Watson, who speaks here for many others. Salud.

Miss Hellman leaves the funeral home again, and when she later calls to get John Watson's address, she is told that the funeral man has never heard of Watson. He had received the body from one Dr. Chester Lowe at 30 Downshire Hill. Miss Hellman goes there and finds a large house converted to flats; Dr. Lowe's name is not on the nameplate. She then returns with the body to New York, sailing on "the old *De Grasse*."

In America, she goes to the house of Julia's grandmother, where the family shows no interest in receiving the body. She has it cremated and the ashes deposited in an unspecified location. In later years, she makes unsuccessful attempts to locate Julia's daughter, whom Julia had told her in Berlin was living with foster parents in Mulhouse, in Alsace. The family is notably uncooperative in her efforts. The tale ends years later with Miss Hellman meeting a distant cousin of Julia who denies any knowledge of the child's existence.

THIS account, like that of the trip to Berlin, is troubled with improbabilities. Why did Watson and his associates inform Miss Hellman rather than Julia's family? Why did he "count on" Miss Hellman's coming to London when he did not ask her to do so? Why did Julia's colleagues, once having gotten her out of Germany, bring her, gravely wounded, all the way to London rather than stopping in the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, or France? Going to London would have at least doubled the distance of the journey, and, given the sea crossing, would have increased the time by even more. Would they have taken a badly wounded, indeed, dying, woman aboard a Channel or North Sea steamer? Or, more improbably still in 1938, an airliner? And why did Miss Hellman return home on a ship that, as one can verify from a check of the records, sailed from Le Havre and called at no British port?

Diane Johnson, in a new biography of Dashiell Hammett, written with Miss Hellman's full cooperation, reports that in the spring of 1938 Hammett, while working in Hollywood, suffered a serious physical and mental breakdown. His friends put him on a plane to New York, where he was received by what Miss Johnson describes as a "terrified Lillian." On May 23, when Miss Hellman received Watson's telegram, Hammett was in Lenox Hill Hospital in serious condition, and did not leave there until the middle of June. Miss Hellman mentions none of this; but it seems on the face of it improbable that she would have left Hammett's bedside, and even more improbable that she would not have mentioned the fact in her account.

It is also inconceivable that Julia's death would not have come to the attention of the English authorities. There would have been some explaining to do to the immigration authorities about Julia's condition when she arrived in England. The undertaker would have insisted on a death certificate for the body, which no doctor would have given, for under English law, any doctor who cannot certify a natural cause for a death must notify the police, who then set an inquest in motion. And there would have been complicated legal formalities attendant on exporting the corpse. Yet two separate searches by Scotland Yard (made at my request in August and September 1983) failed to find any record of Julia's presence in London: no report to the police of her violent death, no record of the inevitable coroner's inquest. Nor are there any records of the corpse leaving the United Kingdom, in or out of Miss Hellman's company.

Finally, Miss Hellman tells us that she returned home on "the old *De Grasse*." As I have said, this is a rather odd choice for a lady traveling with a corpse, necessitating as it would have done a Channel crossing to Le Havre and additional customs formalities. The *De Grasse* sailed from Le Havre on June 9, reaching New York on the 17th. The passenger list of the *De Grasse* for this crossing has survived, and Miss Hellman does not appear on it. Nor does she appear on the passenger lists of the *Normandie* or the *Aquitania* or any of the two dozen ships that arrived in New York from Channel and North Sea ports during the first through the third weeks of June. Was she traveling incognito? To have done so would have required a false passport, something useful in underground work but which she nowhere mentions as being among her effects.

In short, the account of the 1938 London trip is no more satisfactory than that of the 1937 Berlin one: it is improbable on its face, and its details are at sharp variance with the public record.

But the *Pentimento* account is not the end of the matter. Miss Hellman continues the tale in her 1979 commentary on "Julia" in *Three*. There she relates that many people had been trying to guess the true identity of Julia, but only one, a distant cousin, had succeeded. Miss Hellman tells us further that she cannot identify Julia for legal reasons: her publishers fear a lawsuit for invasion of privacy. As any author knows, publishers' lawyers do tend toward caution in these matters, but considering that the subject of this memoir had already been dead for thirty-five years when it was published, this caution seems excessive.

Still more interestingly, Miss Hellman writes that after the English edition of *Pentimento* appeared, a London physician to whom she assigns the pseudonym "Smith" contacted her claiming to have been raised in the house—30 Downshire Hill—from which the undertaker had obtained Julia's body. He objected, she says, to her having accused his father, also a doctor, of having issued a false

death certificate for Julia. (But no death certificate is mentioned anywhere in *Pentimento*.) Miss Hellman says that she knew she had changed the name of the physician from his real one to "Lowe," and that she *thought* she had changed the address as well. There are thus presumably four names involved here: the two pseudonyms "Smith" and "Lowe," and the real names of "Lowe" in 1938 and "Smith" today. Miss Hellman must know the real name of "Lowe" in order to know that she had changed it; if it was not the same as the real name of "Smith," then "Smith's" entire claim to knowledge of the affair is demolished. But if it is the same, Miss Hellman does not say so.

As to the address, she says she was unsure of it because her notes on the London trip had been made some time after the event. A reading of *Pentimento* reveals that in 1973 Miss Hellman was claiming to have *no notes whatever* of the London trip.

There is more that Miss Hellman reports in *Three*. On her next visit to London following this first exchange, the younger Dr. Smith telephoned and proposed a rendezvous which he did not in the event attend. He then telephoned again, and there were confused background conversations with his infirm parent, who conveyed his approbation of Miss Hellman's having done "some justice" to Julia. Finally, the younger Dr. Smith told Miss Hellman that his family had always known the whereabouts and fate of Julia's daughter. The Germans, invading Alsace, had made straight for the house where she was living and had killed both her and her foster parents.

Miss Hellman, inexplicably, remarks that she was glad to hear the child was dead. She ends her 1979 commentary on "Julia" by justifying her reluctance to research the Smith/Lowe connection further on the grounds that no nation pays honor to its premature anti-Nazis. There is a classical fitness about this, for it is with a similar passage that she began her tale of Julia. It is no more intelligible here: the most distinguished British premature anti-Nazi was named Winston Churchill, and he and his fellows who opposed Hitler in the 1930's derived great honor thereby as long as they lived. It is preposterous to imagine that anyone in England could suffer by being recognized today as having been anti-Nazi in 1937 or 1938. All the passage does is to smear British society with the charge of pro-fascism. This, indeed, was once a familiar charge of the "premature anti-Nazis" (as many later took to calling themselves) associated with the *Daily Worker* and other Communist and pro-Communist publications in the period up until the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939.

BEFORE leaving the topic of Julia altogether, we should notice an earlier appearance by her in Miss Hellman's *An Unfinished Woman*. The reference comes in Miss Hellman's account of her early days as a manuscript reader for the publishing firm of Horace Liveright.

One of Liveright's prize authors, Samuel Hopkins Adams, is working on a sequel to his novel, *Flaming Youth*. In order to update his knowledge of the sexual mores of the young, he interviews Miss Hellman and two of her colleagues. They cannot resist the temptation to guy him: one of them, named Alice, tells him that only her confessor has the full details of her experience, but that she can make him write them down, her father being a papal count. At this point in the narrative, Miss Hellman inserts a characteristic aside about Alice's later career: "Her father was a rich Jew from Detroit and she was already started on the road to Marxism that would lead her, as a student doctor, to be killed in the Vienna riots of 1934."

Here at last, if not long before, we must reject the long arm of coincidence. It is simply beyond believing that in addition to the undoubted existence of Muriel Gardiner, there were *two* other rich young American Marxist women at the University of Vienna medical school during the 1930's, and that both of them were personal friends of Miss Hellman. She mentions no such extraordinary coincidence in *Pentimento*. In Dr. Gardiner's *Code Name: "MARY,"* Alice no more appears than does Julia, nor does she appear—under any name—in the New York *Times* account of the February 1934 fighting.

It is, however, suggestive that having inserted Alice/Julia into the narrative of her own life, Miss Hellman kills her off—in *An Unfinished Woman* in 1934, in *Pentimento* four years later (after first mutilating her by the loss of a leg). Readers of a Freudian bent may have something to ponder here.

IF THE tale of Julia were the only example of untrustworthiness in Miss Hellman's memoirs, one might conclude that it represents no more than a bizarre aberration in the career of a writer otherwise deserving of the reputation for fierce integrity that she has claimed for herself and that has brought her widespread esteem. But if Martha Gellhorn is to be believed, Miss Hellman's account of her 1937 trip to Spain is as little to be trusted as her account of Julia. And other such problems in Miss Hellman's work exist as well.

In one of the pieces in *Pentimento* Miss Hellman portrays a rich lawyer, Arthur W.A. Cowan, who imposes his company on her over the course of several decades, constantly trying to buy her friendship with lavish gifts of things she does not care for. Hammett does not like him much. At the end of their acquaintance, Cowan becomes involved with a mysterious government agency which may or not be the CIA, and in 1964 he dies in a no less mysterious automobile accident in Spain.

Throughout their acquaintance Cowan talks with Miss Hellman about money. At one point he demands to be allowed to handle all her financial affairs; it is not clear that she accedes to this request. At another point, a London bank informs Miss Hellman it is holding certain securities be-

longing to Cowan which will come to her in the event of his death. He frequently promises Miss Hellman that he will leave her something nice in his will, a promise, she tells us, he has made to others of his lady friends. According to Miss Hellman, however, his will, "a will that he certainly wrote and rewrote through the years," disappeared and has never been found. She adds that two of Cowan's other lady friends eventually made claims against the estate by producing letters, similar to ones she had received promising a legacy.

Now, Cowan's will did not disappear. It reposes in the records of the Register of Wills in Philadelphia, where it has been since early 1965.\* It consists of three separate holograph documents written by Cowan in 1960 and 1961, making three separate bequests. One is a life income to a lady friend—not Miss Hellman; another is a gift of certain British and South African securities to another lady friend—not Miss Hellman; the third leaves all Cowan's real estate to his sister. A number of Cowan's relatives disputed this will on the technical ground that it was meant to be conditional (it had been written partially on hotel stationery), but in May 1966—seven years before Miss Hellman's assertion in *Pentimento* that no will had ever been found—the Register of Wills concluded that it was meant to be absolute, and admitted it to probate.

What is behind this flat contradiction? The answer is partially provided by an account given by Richard Layman in his biography of Dashiell Hammett, *Shadow Man*, and confirmed by documents in the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress. A business partnership between Miss Hellman and Arthur W.A. Cowan began after Hammett's death, when Miss Hellman, as executrix, was faced with the problem of settling an estate that contained almost nothing in liquid assets and nearly \$200,000 in debts to the government. The principal assets in the estate were some of Hammett's copyrights, and Miss Hellman and Cowan proposed to the court that together they should buy these for \$2,000. In asking for this agreeable arrangement, they argued that Miss Hellman might write Hammett's life, and would therefore need to control his copyrights. (In literary terms this is a non sequitur at best, and in any event Miss Hellman has stated her intention never to write a biography of Hammett.) The probate judge directed that the copyrights should be sold at auction with a reserve price of \$5,000. Hellman and Cowan were the successful bidders at the minimum bid.

The Copyright Office contains the bill of sale, in which Miss Hellman as executrix transfers all of Hammett's literary property to herself and Cowan as individuals. A schedule attached to the bill of sale lists all of Hammett's novels and over thirty short stories. Since Hammett's books largely remain

\* For his assistance in extracting a copy of this will from the Philadelphia authorities, I am deeply indebted to Donald Gosnay.

in print, his copyrights produce a nice piece of change. It is surprising, to say the least, that Miss Hellman should not have mentioned Cowan's role as the architect of this arrangement.

Richard Layman offers the additional piece of information that Cowan's share of the copyright was left to Miss Hellman after his death. There is no evidence for this in the will on file in Philadelphia, but the Copyright Office contains two documents, one dated 1967, another 1974, by which Cowan's sister, the executrix of his estate, warrants not only that the estate has no claim of ownership in any of three named stories, but that as far as the Cowan estate is concerned, "Miss Lillian Hellman has the full rights to deal with or dispose of the Dashiell Hammett literary properties."

It is not obvious what lies behind this quitclaim—possibly Miss Hellman convinced Cowan's sister that Cowan had intended his share in the copyrights to go to Miss Hellman, and as executrix Cowan's sister treated this as a valid claim against the estate. But whatever the explanation, certainly nothing in *Pentimento* would prepare one for the view of Miss Hellman's relationship with Cowan that is revealed by the fact. The account given by her depicts Cowan's benefactions as unwanted or chimerical. The true history of his relation to the Hammett copyrights shows him to have been unaffectedly generous to Miss Hellman in his lifetime, and perhaps after.

In *Three* (1979), Miss Hellman reports that a lively correspondence grew up over her portrait of Cowan in *Pentimento*. There were, for example, denunciatory letters from pseudonymous correspondents in Philadelphia. She does not supply details of these, but suggests that they may have come from disgruntled relatives, concerned about her "intimation that he had written a will that was never found."

She had, of course, done more than intimate: she had stated outright that the will had never been found, a falsehood that might well have caused concern among Cowan's family. Her 1979 commentary does not, for some reason, mention the correspondence which she must have conducted, directly or through intermediaries, with Cowan's sister, and which led to her possessing a full share in the copyrights. But it is hard to disagree with Miss Hellman's own judgment in this commentary that Cowan deserved "something better from me if only I could have found it or said it."

ANOTHER very large area in which Miss Hellman's latter-day memory does not square with history is her treatment of her former political opinions. Since this is one realm in which others—particularly in reviews of *Scoundrel Time*—have pointed out misstatements and inconsistencies in her account, our discussion of it here can be brief.

Miss Hellman has been hesitant to put a name to her political stand in the 1930's. She was, she

says in one place, "nobody's girl"; in "Julia," she suggests that she was somewhere between a Jeffersonian Democrat and a simple agrarian reformer, full of "the strong feelings the early Roosevelt period brought to many people." She does admit on two occasions that she was slow to see the faults in what she calls "Stalin Communism." But she also says, "The truth is that I never thought about Stalin at all."

This is a rather odd failing in someone who had visited Moscow during the Great Purge. Miss Hellman has an explanation for this, and she repeats it twice in the expanded version of *An Unfinished Woman*—once in the 1969 account of her 1937 trip to Moscow, and once in her 1979 reflection on her account of a later trip to Moscow. The explanation is that she did not know about the purge trials when she went to Moscow; the people at the U.S. embassy were full of dark stories about the Soviet regime, but their malice toward it was so apparent that she did not believe them.

If she did not know about the purge trials before she went to Moscow, presumably some time in September or October 1937, she was remarkably ill-informed. By this time, the 1935 trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev, as well as their 1936 retrial (the first of the great show trials), and the 1937 show trial of the alleged Trotskyists, had all been held and fully reported in the press. Additionally, in 1937 Marshal Tukhachevsky and other members of the general staff had been tried *in camera* and their executions announced. If Miss Hellman was in fact unaware of all this, she had to be living in a cave.

That she was not living in a cave is evident from two statements published in the Communist party newspaper, the *Daily Worker*. The first, on February 9, 1937, just after the defendants in the 1937 show trial had been shot, appeals to American liberals to reject the proposal of John Dewey and Sidney Hook for a thorough investigation of the second Moscow trial; the statement defends the trial as entirely justified. One of the signatories is Lillian Hellman, "dramatist and author." The second, on April 28, 1938, states the belief of the signatories—Miss Hellman among them—that the third show trial was entirely fair, that the Soviet Union should be allowed to deal with its traitors in its own way, and that the United States is facing a fascist attempt to destroy democracy similar to that just nipped in the bud by the Soviet Union.

The fact is that the signatories had no independent evidence whatsoever as to the truth of the charges. They simply accepted, without a trace of skepticism, the monstrously false case of the prosecutor. Nor were they bothered by the oddity that defendants who had pled guilty were then tried. This alone ought to have alerted them that something other than the efficient and fair administration of criminal justice was afoot. Finally, it is inconceivable that someone who thus twice joined with others to defend Stalin's crimes "never thought about Stalin at all."

In her 1979 commentary on *An Unfinished Woman*, Miss Hellman relates that when "[she] knew about the purges," she secured a history of them and read aloud from it with Hammett. Her conclusion was that lawyers are the same the world over, and that Vyshinsky, the state prosecutor, was a "tricky old bastard . . . and a disgusting cheap-jack." Are we to conclude that she signed the two *Daily Worker* statements without reading the full coverage of the trials printed in the *New York Times* and the *Daily Worker*?

In a diary entry attributed to 1944, Miss Hellman reflects on the purges of 1937-38: "Great honor must and will be paid those who tossed about in silent doubt and despair, but it is even harder to believe that they did not understand what was happening." What attitude should we adopt, then, toward one who, far from keeping an agonized silence, publicly apologized for the trials, and attacked those who "did protest"?

Finally, defending herself against the charge that she has been pro-Communist, Miss Hellman tells us:

I have always sent money to the early dissidents, who have sometimes used it to eat with or, more often, shared it with others who needed it even more. A number of people took it in for me, some bewildered, some knowing the risks. When the attacks on *Scoundrel Time* came I had a letter from one man who transmitted money for me many times. He offered to write a public letter and say that. It was brave of him, because he is a journalist and it would have cost him his job.

As is often the case in her pages, Miss Hellman's claim is too vague to know what to make of it. Her apparent willingness to use people who did not know the risks they were taking requires no comment. But it is especially unclear what bearing a letter attesting to her charity would have had on the criticism of *Scoundrel Time*. The burden of her critics was not that she had been beastly to dissidents, but rather that she had fiddled with the facts about her political views and her role in testifying before Congress. Nor it is clear why this ghost would have lost his job for his actions.

Miss Hellman's memoirs are studded with accounts of her philanthropies. Such acts of charity are all very fine, but the early dissidents, whoever they might have been, would have benefited as much—or more—from her public support. She was, after all, a person of immense prestige within the Soviet Union, to this day one of the two U.S. playwrights of the 1930's mentioned by name—for

her "progressive" work—in the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*.

IN 1980, Miss Hellman published a fourth memoir with the pregnant title of *Maybe*. Although *Maybe* is apposite to a study of Miss Hellman because it is about a woman who lies about her past, its substance need not concern us. Its theme should, however, for it is largely about memory, fallibility, and the need to be honest.

Miss Hellman interrupts her narrative at one point to interpose a reflection:

It goes without saying that in their memoirs people should try to tell the truth as they see it or else what's the sense? Maybe time blurs or changes things for them. But you try, anyway. In the three memoir books I wrote, I tried very hard for the truth.

This dogged proclamation echoes two earlier passages. One appears in the preface to *Three*: "I tried in these books to tell the truth. I did not fool with facts." The other appears in "Julia," and it is the most pointed of all:

I think I have always known about my memory: I know when it is to be trusted and when some dream or fantasy entered on the life, and the dream, the need of dream, led to the distortion of what happened. And so I knew early that the rampage angers of an only child were distorted nightmares of reality. But I trust absolutely what I remember about Julia.

This is a remarkable statement: that part of her past which, when placed against the template of reality, displays the most incongruities, is just the part of her past about which Miss Hellman feels the surest.

Many of the facts misrepresented by Miss Hellman are not in themselves terribly important. Nor is her inaccurate reporting on various people she has known unique among memoirists. In time, if literary historians learn to use her cautiously, her contaminating effect on our knowledge of our times may prove minor.

The real issue posed by Miss Hellman's behavior is that she has manipulated millions of readers and moviegoers into admiring her as an ethical exemplar, and as a ruthlessly honest writer. Her eventual reputation in this regard—whatever might be the outcome of her suit against Mary McCarthy—will tell us a good deal about the health, intellectual no less than moral, of our literary establishment.

# The Decline and Fall of Islamic Jewry

*Bernard Lewis*

WESTERN travelers, almost unanimously, confirm the impression that the period from the end of the 18th into the second half of the 19th century was the lowest point in the existence of the Jews in the Muslim lands. At first most of these travelers were Christians, since few European Jews were willing or able to undertake journeys in Muslim countries. In time, however, a few daring spirits ventured into these lands and added their testimony to that of their Christian predecessors.

At a time when Jews in Western Europe were beginning to enjoy the fruits of emancipation, several of the Christian travelers marked the contrast between the Jews they met in Muslim lands and those whom they knew at home. Thus Charles MacFarlane, who spent some time in Istanbul in 1828, notes that the Jews are "the last and most degraded of the Turkish Rayahs . . . loaded with the concurrent and utter contempt of Frank, Turk, and Armenian." Like many Western travelers, he reports the current stereotype of the Eastern Jew as dirty and cowardly, and goes on to say:

Throughout the Ottoman dominions, their pusillanimity is so excessive, that they will flee before the uplifted hand of a child. Yet in England the Jews become bold and expert pugilists, and are as ready to resent an insult as any other of His Majesty's liege subjects. A striking proof of the effects of oppression in one country, and of liberty, and of the protection of equal laws, in the other.

The "uplifted hand of a child" could represent a mortal threat, as was noted in the same year by another English traveler, this time in Morocco, who, attributing a mean and degraded quality to the Moroccan Jews, ascribes it to

the debasement to which they are subject even from the children of a true believer. I have seen a little fellow of six years old, with a troop of fat

toddlings of only three and four, teaching their young ideas [*sic*] to throw stones at a Jew, and one little urchin would, with the greatest coolness, waddle up to the man and literally spit upon his "Jewish gabardine." To all this the Jew is obliged to submit; it would be more than his life was worth to offer to strike a Mahomedan.

Even in Istanbul the situation was hardly better. Julia Pardoe, in a description of "the city of the Sultan" in 1836, makes the point very vividly:

I never saw the curse denounced against the children of Israel more fully brought to bear than in the East; where it may be truly said that "their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them."—Where they are considered rather as a link between animals and human beings, than as men possessed of the same attributes, warmed by the same sun, chilled by the same breeze, subject to the same feelings, and impulses, and joys, and sorrows, as their fellow-mortals.

There is a subdued and spiritless expression about the Eastern Jew, of which the comparatively tolerant European can picture to himself no possible idea until he has looked upon it. . . . It is impossible to express the contemptuous hatred in which the Osmanlis hold the Jewish people; and the veriest Turkish urchin who may encounter one of the fallen nation on his path, has his meed of insult to add to the degradation of the outcast and wandering race of Israel. Nor dare the oppressed party revenge himself even upon this puny enemy, whom his very name suffices to raise up against him.

I remember, on the occasion of the great festival at Kahaitchana [Kâthane], seeing a Turkish boy of perhaps ten years of age, approach a group of Jewesses, and deliberately fixing upon one whose delicate state of health should have been her protection from insult, gave her so violent a blow as to deprive her of consciousness, and level her to the earth. As I sprang forward to the assistance of this unfortunate, I was held back by a Turk of my acquaintance, a man of rank, and I had hitherto believed, divested of such painful prejudices; who bade me not agitate, or trouble myself on the occasion, as the woman was *only a Jewess!* And of the numbers of Turkish females who stood looking on, not one raised a hand to assist the wretched victim of gratuitous barbarity.

BERNARD LEWIS is Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and a long-term member of the Institute for Advanced Study. Among his many works are *The Arabs in History*, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, and *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. The present article is adapted from Mr. Lewis's new book, *The Jews of Islam*, which Princeton University Press will bring out in August.

Such practices survived into modern times, as may be gathered from a report written by the British vice consul in Mosul in January 1909, that is, after the Young Turk revolution of 1908:

The attitude of the Muslims toward the Christians and Jews, to whom . . . they are in a majority of ten to one, is that of a master toward slaves whom he treats with a certain lordly tolerance so long as they keep their place. Any sign of pretension to equality is promptly repressed. It is often noticed in the street that almost any Christian submissively makes way even for a Muslim child. Only a few days ago the writer saw two respectable-looking, middle-aged Jews walking in a garden. A small Muslim boy, who could not have been more than eight years old, passed by and, as he did so, picked up a large stone and threw it at them—and then another—with the utmost nonchalance, just as a small boy elsewhere might aim at a dog or bird. The Jews stopped and avoided the aim, which was a good one, but made no further protest.

COMPARED to the Jews of Iran, however, the Jews of the Ottoman empire were living in paradise. The verdict of the travelers is summed up by the Hungarian Jewish Orientalist, Arminius Vambery, who traveled extensively in Iran and Central Asia: "I do not know any more miserable, helpless, and pitiful individual on God's earth than the *Jahudi* in those countries. . . . The poor Jew is despised, belabored, and tortured alike by Muslim, Christian, and Brahmin, he is the poorest of the poor, and is stripped by Armenians, Greeks, and Brahmins."

Perhaps the most informative of Western writers on 19th-century Iran was George, later Lord Curzon, whose great work *Persia and the Persian Question* appeared in 1892. Among numerous references to the Jews in that country, he has this to say on their situation in general:

Throughout the Mussulman countries of the East these unhappy people have been subjected to the persecution which custom has taught themselves, as well as the world, to regard as their normal lot. Usually compelled to live apart in a Ghetto, or separate quarter of the towns, they have from time immemorial suffered from disabilities of occupation, dress, and habits, which have marked them out as social pariahs from their fellow creatures. The majority of Jews in Persia are engaged in trade, in jewelry, in wine and opium manufacture, as musicians, dancers, scavengers, peddlers, and in other professions to which is attached no great respect. They rarely attain to a leading mercantile position. In Isfahan, where there are said to be 3,700, and where they occupy a relatively better status than elsewhere in Persia, they are not permitted to wear the *kolah* or Persian headdress, to have shops in the bazaar, to build the walls of their houses as high as a Muslim neighbor's, or to ride in the streets. In Teheran and Kashan they are also to be found in large numbers and enjoying a fair

position. In Shiraz they are very badly off. At Bushire they are prosperous and free from persecution. As soon, however, as any outburst of bigotry takes place in Persia or elsewhere, the Jews are apt to be the first victims. Every man's hand is then against them; and woe betide the luckless Hebrew who is the first to encounter a Persian street mob. . . . During the absence of the Shah in Europe in 1889, a fanatical disturbance took place in Shiraz and Isfahan, largely instigated by the clerical firebrand, Sheikh Agha Nejefi . . . , in the course of which a Jew was killed in the streets, and his murderer was at first suffered to go scot-free, and finally only sentenced to the bastinado. The Sheikh, by way of improving or embittering the situation, took upon himself to promulgate a series of archaic disabling laws against the Jews of Isfahan, in which odious restrictions were imposed upon their food, dress, habits, life, fortune, inheritance, and trade. The Zil-es-Sultan was afraid to move for fear of endangering his position. It was largely in consequence of this outbreak that an influential deputation from the Anglo-Jewish Association waited upon the Shah while in London, and presented to him a memorial on the subject of their co-religionists in Persia. The Shah gave assurances of protection, which were much needed, and which, it is to be hoped, will be carried out.

Such descriptions—and many others could be added to them—no doubt helped to arouse the concern of Western Jews for their Eastern brethren. Some of these authors indeed explicitly urged them to action. Thus John MacGregor, who toured Syria, Palestine, and Egypt in 1869, remarked: "Jews amongst us Gentiles in England have refinement, cleanliness, luxury, and elegance—why don't they send to the rabbis of Galilee, at any rate, besoms and soap?"

THE troubles of the Jews in Islamic lands in this period were not limited to poverty and degradation. For the first time in centuries they found themselves exposed to active hostility, not only in Iran, where such things were not uncommon in earlier times, but also in the Ottoman lands and Morocco. From the late 18th century through the 19th century, expulsion, outbreaks of mob violence, and even massacres became increasingly frequent. Between 1770 and 1786 Jews were expelled from Jidda, most of them fleeing to the Yemen. In 1790 Jews were massacred in Tetuán, in Morocco; in 1828, in Baghdad. In 1834 a cycle of violence and pillage began in Safed. In 1839 a massacre of Jews took place in Meshed in Iran followed by the forced conversion of the survivors, and a massacre of Jews occurred in Barfurush in 1867. In 1840 the Jews of Damascus were subject to the first of a long series of blood libels in many cities. Other outbreaks followed in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and the Arab countries of the Middle East.

With the increasing centralization of government through the 19th-century reforms, Ottoman rule became in many ways more effective. There was, for example, a notable improvement in the condition of the Jews in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (the two provinces that later became Libya) after 1835, when direct Ottoman administration replaced the previous autonomous local regimes. From the reforms until the end of the empire, through various changes of political order, the Ottoman authorities in general did their best to protect their Jewish subjects from the hostility of local populations and of rival minorities. Where they failed—as they sometimes did—it was through weakness or indolence rather than through active ill will.

The reforms and accompanying changes brought some alleviation to the deteriorating Jewish condition in the Middle East, which had become very marked by the early 19th century.

This deterioration may be attributed to a number of causes: the internal decline of the Jewish communities; the falling standard of education and the resulting loss of useful and marketable skills; the ousting of Jews from their traditional vocations by better-equipped, better-educated, and above all better-protected Christian competitors. To these may be added the general decline in Islamic power, and its effect on Muslim attitudes to the subject communities. By the early 19th century, Muslims were becoming aware of the advance of Europe and their own relative weakness. The Russians had conquered and annexed the Muslim lands around the Black Sea and in Transcaucasia and before long were able to advance into the old Muslim cities of Central Asia. In 1798 the French conquered Egypt with ease and held it for over three years; they had left it because of British, not Muslim, power. In 1830 the French invaded Algeria; in 1839 the British took Aden. These were only the first steps in the establishment of a British, French, and Russian stranglehold on the heartlands of Islam.

Nor was that all. The Russians in Transcaucasia, the French in Egypt, found among the local Christians willing and helpful assistants in establishing control over Muslim populations. Muslim resentment of these changes, seen as a violation of the old established principles by which *dhimmīs*—i.e., protected non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim state—were treated, is clearly expressed in the literature of the time. That resentment increased with the advance of Russian, French, British, and later also German penetration of the Middle East and North Africa, and the growing numbers of former *dhimmīs* who in one capacity or another served the European great powers. Loss of power led to loss of confidence, and this in turn to loss of tolerance. What remained of Muslim tolerance was subjected to severe strains as the *dhimmīs* tried to combine the totally incompatible objectives of

equal citizenship, foreign protection, and national independence. Sufferance gave way to mistrust, and the easy contempt of early times was replaced by an often well-founded fear, sometimes mixed with envy.

**I**N ALL this the Jew was not, in Muslim eyes, the principal offender. It was, rather, the native Christian who was seen as aiding the enemies of Islam. But from mid-century on, the Jew also began to enjoy his secondhand share of the fruits of empire when, thanks to new educational opportunities, Jews as well as local Christians were able to offer their services, in various capacities, to foreign governments and businesses. But if the Jew was not the principal malefactor, he was certainly the easiest victim. The Christians were numerous and well-protected; the Jews were few, and enjoyed, at best, a slender and intermittent protection from outside powers. At a time of general, often undirected, fear and resentment, it was natural that hostility should turn against the Jewish as well as the Christian *dhimmīs*, and that attacks should be directed to that quarter where there was the least chance of either immediate defense or subsequent retribution.

To make matters worse, it was not only the Muslims who turned against the Jews; it was also—and indeed more particularly—their Christian *dhimmī* compatriots, who, glorying in their new power and the protection of their mighty patrons, turned against their hapless Jewish neighbors, their ancient bigotry reinforced by modern ideologies. From the 1860's onward there was an ominous growth of European-style anti-Semitism among the Christian communities of the empire. This was strongest among the Greeks, but also affected other Christians, including the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Levant and Egypt. One reason for this was certainly their increased openness to influences from Europe, including the precept and practice of European anti-Semitism; another was the educational and economic revival that was beginning among Ottoman Jews in the second half of the 19th century, and which confronted Christian merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans with competition from a quarter they had been accustomed to discount. Significantly, the appearance of anti-Semitic slogans and accusations was almost always accompanied by attacks on Jewish shops and workshops and calls for boycotts. The Muslim populations were the last to be affected by these incitements, and the Ottoman authorities usually gave what protection they could to their Jewish subjects. Almost to the end of the empire, numbers of Jews suffering or fearing persecution fled from Russia, Rumania, and other Balkan countries and found refuge in the Ottoman lands.

In Istanbul and other Turkish cities, there seems to have been a realization among Muslims that in this period the Jews were not the enemies but the

fellow victims of the Turks. Turkish public opinion was not in general anti-Jewish, and Turkish official action was sometimes taken to protect the Jews from their local persecutors. In the Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire, among a politically less sophisticated population, anti-Jewish outbreaks became more frequent. In the North African countries, where there was no native Christian population, the Jews were more useful to the imperial powers, and consequently more hateful to their Muslim neighbors.

THE Jews suffered from two major weaknesses in confronting these dangers: their unprotected status, which made them easy victims, and their low level of education, which left them without useful skills and therefore despised by Muslim and Christian, Easterner and Westerner alike.

It was to these two problems that a number of Jewish organizations in Europe and America principally addressed themselves. Of these the most important by far was the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, based in Paris, which maintained a network of primary and vocational schools for Jews throughout the Middle East and North Africa. In both respects the organizations achieved considerable successes. Their major public effort was devoted to improving the legal status of the Jews in these countries by securing better laws and their more effective application, and they proceeded by intercession or even intervention.

One important method was by publicity. In earlier times even large-scale persecutions could pass virtually unnoticed. In the age of the telegraph and the newspaper press, with a network of *Alliance* and other representatives all over the Middle East and North Africa, cases of ill-treatment or persecution were immediately known and made public. Such reports could cause grave embarrassment to Muslim rulers, especially at a time when most of them were bankrupt and in urgent need of raising loans on the European money markets. This gave an added force to the intercessions and interventions by Jewish individuals or organizations or by European governments, which from 1840 onward became increasingly frequent.

The most effective form of intervention was through the official channels of a European great power. With the establishment of direct European control—the French in North Africa, the British in southern and eastern Arabia and then in Egypt—the powers themselves became responsible for their Jewish as for their other new subjects. There can be no doubt that the Jews—like the Christians, though not as much—benefited greatly from this change. Even the oppressive and anti-Semitic policies of the czars in Russian-dominated Central Asia represented an improvement on the rule of the amirs that had preceded it. In British-ruled Aden, Egypt, and Iraq, in French-ruled Algeria,

Tunisia, and Morocco, in Italian-ruled Libya, imperial rule ushered in a new era in Jewish educational progress and material prosperity. It also insured the ultimate doom of these communities.

IN THE heartlands of the Middle East, however, two Muslim states, Iran and the Ottoman empire, remained independent. Though their independence was often threatened and to some extent undermined by the European imperial powers, it was never completely lost, and both countries survived well into the 20th century as working polities. Both of them were the home of ancient and important Jewish communities.

Historians of 19th-century Ottoman Jewry have focused attention on a few major events, some of them turning points in the history of the empire as a whole, others of purely Jewish significance. The first of these was the destruction, in 1826, of the Corps of Janissaries, for centuries the main component of the Ottoman infantry, and the ultimate military source of political power. In destroying this ancient and privileged institution, the reforming Sultan Mahmud II (1808-39) was seeking to remove the main prop of opposition to his modernizing and Westernizing reforms, and to clear the way for a new-style army, trained, organized, and equipped along European lines, and wholly devoted to the person of the sultan and to the enforcement of whatever policies he might choose to promulgate.

One might assume that the removal of a military corporation that was the mainstay of reactionary and religious opposition to modernization would help the Jews, as potential beneficiaries of liberal change. In fact, the reverse was the case, at least in the short run. In the course of time certain wealthy and prominent Jews had established a very close relationship with the Corps of Janissaries, and while this relationship was sometimes interrupted by conflicts and even murders, it remained effective. The quartermasters, purveyors, and merchants of the Janissaries had to a large extent been Jewish, and the destruction of the corps was a major blow to the Jewish interest in Istanbul and elsewhere in the empire.

It was also an important step forward for the Armenians, who had recently acquired a new importance and were beginning to oust the Jews from those functions they still retained in the service of the empire. The advance and enrichment of Ottoman Christians in the 17th and 18th centuries had been accomplished mainly by Greeks and by Syrian Catholics. The Armenians did, however, make some progress, and from the last years of the 18th century onward Armenian merchants, shipowners, entrepreneurs, and bankers assumed an increasingly important role in the Ottoman economic structure. In doing so, they inevitably encroached on the few remaining Jewish footholds in the Ottoman economy. The Corps of Janissaries, and the

small, close-knit group of Jewish merchant families associated with it, were the last redoubt of Jewish economic power. The destruction of the Janissaries was followed by the ruin of their Jewish associates, leaving the way open for the ultimately pyrrhic Armenian victory.

SULTAN MAHMUD II was greatly concerned to centralize and rationalize the government of his empire. This also involved some change in the structure of the Jewish communities that were subject to him. The two major Christian communities, the Greeks and the Armenians, were each organized in a hierarchical ecclesiastical structure, headed by a supreme chief who exercised authority over all his faithful throughout the Ottoman lands, and at the same time was recognized by and answerable to the sultan. In contrast, the Jews had no such central organization. Each city—and in cities of any size, each community—had its own rabbi and wardens. For some seventy years after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the sultans had recognized a chief rabbi of the capital, not of the empire; after 1526 even this office ceased to exist. For the rest of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, there was no one who could speak for the Jews of the empire as a whole except self-appointed dignitaries and men of affairs. Such anarchy was not acceptable to the tidy-minded sultan, and also began to seem dangerous to a Jewish community that felt itself isolated, weakened, and endangered. An imperial *fermān* of 1835 therefore created the office of *hahambashi*, chief rabbi of the empire. According to the rules established, the chief rabbi was to be chosen by the Jews themselves, and appointed and ratified by the sultan.

This new office, and the institutions that administered it, became the focus of a conflict that affected the Jews as it did other communities in 19th-century Turkey—what in another context has been called “the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns.” One of the major themes of 19th-century Turkey was the struggle between those who desired modernization, which at that time and in that place meant those who wanted to Westernize their way of life, and those who saw such change as a mortal threat to their religious and other values and fought desperately to preserve the old order. Attention has naturally concentrated on the struggle between reformers and conservatives among the Turkish and Muslim majority. But there were parallel struggles among the non-Muslim communities of the empire. In most of these conflicts the reformers were, for a while at least, successful. They accomplished major reforms among the Greeks, somewhat later among the Armenians, and finally also among the Christian Arabs.

Among the Jews they failed. European, Turkish, and even Jewish movements of ideas passed the Turkish Jews by. There were few if any among them who had received the kind of European edu-

cation that Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs in increasing numbers had been getting in Christian schools. The ideas of the French Revolution, and the whole intellectual ferment that followed in the early decades of the 19th century and caused such a tremendous stir among the Greeks and Armenians, seem to have had no impact among the Ottoman Jews, who continued undisturbed in their old ways. Nor were they influenced by the stirring of new ideas among the Muslim Turks. Though presumably most of the Jews in Turkey could speak some Turkish, they did so in a manner and with an accent that made them a favorite butt of popular humor. Only a tiny minority could read and write Turkish; however, with the 19th-century reforms, these became more numerous, and some found employment in government service, mostly as interpreters. They played no role in Turkish intellectual life, and were hardly touched by the movements and arguments that were agitating the Turks.

They were equally impervious to the movements that were transforming the outlook of European Jews—Hasidism, the Enlightenment, the Hebrew revival, religious reform, Zionism. All these, so important to the history of the Jews in Europe, for long left the Jews of the Ottoman empire unaffected, even unaware.

Where there were some minimal signs of change, they were due mainly to external pressures or interventions. There were some Italian Jews who moved during the 18th and still more during the 19th centuries from various cities in Italy, especially Livorno, and settled in the Levant and North Africa. These Livornesi, or, as they were called in Hebrew, *Gornim*, became an important element in Jewish communal life in a number of cities, notably in Tunis. They retained some contact with their countries of origin and helped to initiate the resumption of relations between the Jews of the Ottoman empire and those of Europe. A role of some importance was played by a small community of Sephardi Jews from Turkey who, for commercial reasons, had settled in Vienna in the 18th century. These had retained their Ottoman nationality, which incidentally gave them a somewhat better status than that of the native Austrian Jews, and had also preserved close links with Istanbul.

A WELL-MEANING attempt by an Ottoman Jewish philanthropist from Vienna to secure some reform in Jewish communal life brought the inner tensions of the community to a crisis point. The quarrel came into the open in 1862, and it was perhaps the only occasion in the 19th century when the internal affairs of the Jewish community received some attention—even then minimal—in Turkish newspapers and historiography. The crisis began with an attempt at reform, bitterly resisted by the ultraconservative rabbinic controlling the institutions established by

Ottoman law. The Jews began to riot and fight among themselves, to the point where the Ottoman authorities felt bound to intervene. At first this intervention resulted in a victory for the old guard and the imprisonment of some of the reformers. The authorities, however, seemed to have reconsidered the matter, and in 1865 the Jewish community was provided with a new communal constitution. This was not devised or proposed by the Jews themselves, but given to them by the Ottoman government. It was based on the constitution that had been enacted some years earlier for the Armenian community and which had been hammered out by the Armenians themselves after long and bitter arguments.

This new constitution differed from earlier arrangements in that it provided for a role to be played in communal affairs by the laity. Under the terms of this dispensation, the domination of the rabbinate, hitherto total, was to be limited, and in certain specified circumstances the rabbinate was required to consult with a council of laymen.

Even though it was backed with the force of an Ottoman imperial decree, the new arrangement did not work well. The rabbis did not like it, the faithful supported them—and the Ottoman government had more pressing matters requiring its attention. Before long, the constitution became a dead letter, and while the community retained its autonomy, the rabbinate was again in full control. It was not until the last years of the 19th century, when the activities of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* produced a rising generation of French-educated Turkish Jews, that a new spirit began to work among the communities of the empire, and the first windows to the West were opened.

This process was paralleled and encouraged by the development of a new attitude among many Turks and Arabs, especially the Westernized and semi-Westernized urban elements most influenced by liberal and patriotic ideas. Among many of these there was a genuine desire to accord a measure of equality to non-Muslim compatriots, and to draw them into a common political allegiance and a shared social and cultural life. Both in Turkish and in Arab cities there was a mood of liberalism and optimism, and a widespread belief that the different communities of the empire, under a new political dispensation, could live in harmony and work for a common cause.

BY THE early years of the 20th century, individual Jews were even beginning to play a role in politics—a new and radical departure from past precedent, and a striking indication of the changes that were taking place in the political attitudes and perceptions of both the majority and the minorities in the empire. The Jewish political role was incomparably smaller than that of other minorities. What was remarkable was that Jews played any role at all.

Even this small role was considered too much by some observers, outside as well as inside the empire. Popular mythology assigns an important role to the Jews in the conspiratorial committees that, working in secret under Sultan Abdülhamid II, eventually produced the Young Turk revolution of 1908. The charge that this revolution was due to Jewish machinations appeared almost immediately. In the Arab provinces in particular, the overthrow of the sultan's Islamic order was received with horror and alarm, and in several cities there were violent outbreaks against what were seen as the godless usurpers of the sultan's power. One of the charges brought against the Young Turks was that they were transferring power to non-Muslims and, worst of all, to Jews. Some European journalists and diplomats, notably the British ambassador Sir Gerard Lowther and his chief interpreter Gerald H. Fitzmaurice, both addicts of conspiracy theories, took up the theme, and stories of a familiar type about Jewish masonic schemes and designs began to circulate. They were found useful during World War I, when Allied propaganda sought ways to discredit the Young Turk regime in the Arab and more generally in the Islamic world.

In fact the Jewish role in the Young Turk movement was small before the revolution, and virtually nonexistent after it. The leaders of the Young Turk movement that achieved the revolution of 1908 were overwhelmingly Muslim, mostly Turkish and Balkan, some Arab. They included comparatively minor groups of non-Muslims—Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Christian Arabs. A few features combined to give an exaggerated and distorted impression of the role of these minorities in the movement. One was that they were more articulate in Western languages and more visible abroad than their Muslim colleagues. Another was that many of them were citizens or protégés of foreign powers and that their houses were therefore immune from search by the Ottoman police. This made them convenient meeting places for the conspirators; it did not imply that the owners of these houses had any great influence. Much the same may be said of the masonic lodges, in which Jews played a certain role, and which provided a useful cover for the Young Turks. Finally, the fact that the main area of Young Turk activity outside the capital was in Salonika, a major Jewish center, gave the impression of a large Jewish role. This impression was strengthened by the activities of one or two marginal Jewish figures, notably a certain Albert Carasso (also Karasu), a Salonikan Jew who was prominent in Young Turk councils before and during the revolution. A much more important figure was the economist Javid Pasha, who took part in the 1908 revolution and served several times as finance minister in Young Turk governments. He was not a Jew but a *dönme* (that is, a descendant of Jews who had followed the

false messiah Sabbatai Zevi in his conversion to Islam in the late 17th century but maintained a form of crypto-Judaism).

Carasso was the only Jew, and his career did not last long. In the first Ottoman parliament in 1908 elected after the revolution, the members included 147 Turks, 60 Arabs, 27 Albanians, 26 Greeks, 14 Armenians, 10 Slavs (including Bulgarians, Serbs, Macedonians, etc.), and 4 Jews. These proportions held more or less the same throughout the remaining years of the empire.

IN GENERAL, the economic situation of Ottoman Jews continued to be bad. The occupations most frequently listed in *Alliance* school records for the parents of children are hawkers, ragmen, tinkers, bootblacks, match vendors, and water carriers. These are not high-income professions. To take a single example: the Jewish community of Silivri, a small town not far from Istanbul, was tabulated in detail by the *Alliance* representatives in the year 1907. Of 400 Jewish families in Silivri, they recorded the professions of 282, as follows: 130 hawkers, 50 bootblacks, 40 water carriers, 20 grocers, 12 tinkers, 4 butchers, 3 goldsmiths, 2 cobblers, 2 moneychangers, 1 leather seller, 1 glazier, 7 clothiers, 3 barbers, 3 tavernkeepers, 2 government employees, 1 mason, 1 box-maker, and a very large number of people who are described as doing "what they can," presumably odd jobs and occasional work. In addition, most of the Jewish girls in Silivri worked at making lace for various entrepreneurs in Istanbul. Only 12 of the 400 families are described by the *Alliance* representative as "*notables . . . veritablement à l'abri du besoin*"—really safe from need. It is a picture that can be paralleled in many other communities.

The *Alliance* schools were, however, bringing important changes. They taught their pupils trades, and they taught them French. Both of these were of the greatest importance in initiating an upward movement among the Jews of the Ottoman empire that continued into the 20th century, more especially after the revolution of 1908. Their position, however, remained comparatively weak. In this as in other respects, they did not rise with the Christians, but rather fell with the Turks on whose power their fortunes ultimately depended.

The final phase in the decline of Ottoman Jewry began with the occupation of the city of Salonika by the Greek army at the end of 1912, as a result of the Balkan war. Salonika, often called by Jews "a city and a mother in Israel," had indeed been a major Jewish religious and cultural center and certainly the most advanced Jewish community in the Ottoman empire, giving leadership to Sephardi communities everywhere else. This city now passed from Turkish to Greek rule. The Jews of Salonika, familiar with the long record of commercial rivalry and anti-Semitic agitation of their Greek neighbors, viewed this change

with considerable misgiving. Their fears about their possible fate under a Greek government proved to be misplaced. They were nevertheless doomed in that they had lost their *raison d'être*. The Jews of Salonika had enjoyed a symbiosis with the Turks, such as they could never hope to have with the Greeks. As part of the Ottoman empire, Salonika had a natural economic hinterland in the Ottoman Balkans, which it no longer possessed as a northeastern outpost of the Greek kingdom. In 1914 the Ottoman empire blundered into World War I, and its Jews, like all its other subjects, were involved in its final collapse. The decay of the Jewish community of Salonika, cut off from its economic and its Jewish hinterland, continued without interruption until its extermination by the Nazis.

THE Jews of Iran in the same period suffered the same disadvantages and more, and enjoyed none of the same advantages as their brethren in the Ottoman lands. Isolated among a hostile and fanatical population, rarely protected by the public authorities, they had the further disadvantage of living in a remote country where few visitors, Christian or Jewish, would observe and report on their plight.

However, there were some, and their descriptions, which generally agree, are confirmed by the reports of the *Alliance* representatives when schools were established in Iran from 1865 onward. The Jewish traveler J. J. Benjamin, who traveled in Iran at mid-century, summarized the misfortunes of the Persian Jews under fifteen headings:

1. Throughout Persia the Jews are obliged to live in a part of the town separated from the other inhabitants; for they are considered as unclean creatures, who bring contamination with their intercourse and presence.
2. They have no right to carry on trade in stuff goods.
3. Even in the streets of their own quarter of the town they are not allowed to keep any open shop. They may only sell their spices and drugs, or carry on the trade of a jeweler, in which they have attained great perfection.
4. Under the pretext of their being unclean, they are treated with the greatest severity, and should they enter a street inhabited by Mussulmans, they are pelted by the boys and mobs with stones and dirt.
5. For the same reason they are forbidden to go out when it rains; for it is said the rain would wash dirt off them, which would sully the feet of the Mussulmans.
6. If a Jew is recognized as such in the streets, he is subjected to the greatest insults. The passers-by spit in his face, and sometimes beat him so unmercifully, that he falls to the ground, and is obliged to be carried home.
7. If a Persian kills a Jew, and the family of the deceased can bring forward two Mussulmans

as witnesses to the fact, the murderer is punished by a fine of 12 tumauns (600 piastres); but if two such witnesses cannot be produced, the crime remains unpunished, even though it has been publicly committed, and is well known.

8. The flesh of the animals slaughtered according to Hebrew custom, but as *Trefe* declared, must not be sold to any Mussulmans. The slaughterers are compelled to bury the meat, for even the Christians do not venture to buy it, fearing the mockery and insult of the Persians.

9. If a Jew enters a shop to buy anything, he is forbidden to inspect the goods, but must stand at a respectful distance and ask the price. Should his hand incautiously touch the goods, he must take them at any price the seller chooses to ask for them.

10. Sometimes the Persians intrude into the dwellings of the Jews and take possession of whatever pleases them. Should the owner make the least opposition in defense of his property, he incurs the danger of atoning for it with his life.

11. Upon the least dispute between a Jew and a Persian, the former is immediately dragged before the Achund [religious authority], and, if the complainant can bring forward two witnesses, the Jew is condemned to pay a heavy fine. If he is too poor to pay this penalty in money, he must pay it in his person. He is stripped to the waist, bound to a stake, and receives forty blows with a stick. Should the sufferer utter the least cry of pain during this proceeding, the blows already given are not counted, and the punishment is begun afresh.

12. In the same manner the Jewish children, when they get into a quarrel with those of the Mussulmans, are immediately led before the Achund, and punished with blows.

13. A Jew who travels in Persia is taxed in every inn and every caravanserai he enters. If he hesitates to satisfy any demand that may happen to be made on him, they fall upon him, and maltreat him until he yields to their terms.

14. If . . . a Jew shows himself in the street during the three days of the Katel [feast of mourning for the death of the Persian founder of the religion of Ali] he is sure to be murdered.

15. Daily and hourly suspicions are raised against the Jews, in order to obtain excuses for fresh extortions; the desire of gain is always the chief incitement to fanaticism.

The *Alliance* reports contain a number of accounts of the occupational distribution of Persian Jews. Thus a report of Shiraz in 1903 lists some 5,000 Jews as follows: 400 peddlers, 200 masons, 102 goldsmiths, 90 merchants, 80 wine sellers, 60 musicians, 20 grocers, 15 butchers, 10 vintners, 10 moneychangers, 5 dry-goods merchants, 5 jewelers, 5 physicians, 2 surgeons. Another, for Kermanshah in the same year, lists 70 grocery peddlers, 55 merchants, 44 textile peddlers, 27 dyers, 23 goldsmiths, 22 grocers, 15 porters, 10 weavers, 5 brokers, 3 wine

sellers, 3 barbers, 3 synagogue beadles, 3 well diggers, 2 vintners, 2 Hebrew teachers.

The *Alliance* records include numerous stories of ill-treatment, humiliation, and persecution. Toward the end of the century the shah sometimes intervened to protect his Jews from mob violence or religious hostility, but this was rare and usually not very effective. Even the accusation of ritual murder, not known in the past, reached Iran, and a particularly bad case occurred in Shiraz in 1910. Appeals to foreign rulers, the queen (later king) of England, the president of France, the sultan of Turkey, were also of limited help. There was no real change until after the constitutional revolution of 1905, and no substantial improvement in the condition of Persian Jews until after the fall of the Qajar dynasty in 1925.

IN THE Arab lands of the Middle East and North Africa, the position of the Jews was for a while very much better and benefited greatly from the prevalence, at that time, of liberal ideas and aspirations among the political class. One prominent Jew, the Egyptian James (Ya'qūb) Sanua, better known by his pen name Abū Naddara (1839-1912), even played a certain role as a patriotic journalist and as a playwright. In general, the participation of Jews in Arab intellectual and cultural life, though greater than among the Turks, was—with the exception of Iraq—limited. In other respects, however, their educational standards and therefore their economic opportunities improved, while the new systems of government that were being created gave them an unprecedented degree of civil and political security. But these improvements were linked with the establishment of Western predominance, either directly through imperial rule or indirectly through political and cultural influence. This association was ultimately to prove fatal to these communities, when that predominance weakened and ended.

The Jewish communities in various Arab countries often differed quite considerably in the paths that they followed. In Iraq the Jewish community, while preserving an ancient tradition of Hebrew religious learning, was thoroughly Arab in language and culture, and profoundly integrated into the society; some of its members played an important part in the literary, musical, and artistic revival. The Jews of Egypt were at the opposite extreme. While the lower classes remained Arabic-speaking and Egyptian in sentiment, in the middle and upper classes Jews—like many Christians and even some Muslims—were often alienated in both culture and nationality, for the most part using Italian and later French rather than Arabic, sending their children to foreign-language schools, and often obtaining the citizenship of a European country. In the end, both Iraqi and Egyptian Jews suffered the same fate.

WESTERN influence prepared the downfall of the Islamic Jewries in more ways than one—not only by violating the *dhimma* and thus exposing them to the hostility of the Muslim majorities, but also by providing new theories and forms of expression for this hostility. From the late 19th century, as a direct result of European influence, movements appear among Muslims of which for the first time one can legitimately use the term anti-Semitic. Hostility to Jews had of course roots in the past, but in this era it assumed a new and radically different character. The starting point was the very strong feeling that the proper relationship between believer and unbeliever, between Muslim and *dhimmi*, had been subverted. This feeling was fueled by growing resentment at the favor shown by European powers to members of the non-Muslim minorities and at the consequent successes achieved by members of these minorities, who attained positions of power and wealth under foreign rule or influence they would never have been able to achieve in the old Muslim order. This resentment was directed at Christians as much as Jews—indeed rather more so. But a specific campaign against Jews, expressed in the unmistakable language of European Christian anti-Semitism, first appeared among Christians in the 19th century, and developed among Christians and then Muslims in the 20th. European consuls and traders, working with local Christian minorities, played a role in ousting Jews and securing their replacement by Middle Eastern Christians. They were also active in the spread of certain classical themes of European anti-Semitism—for example, in the introduction of the blood libel, and in conjuring up fantasies of Jewish plots to gain world domination.

The first anti-Semitic tracts in Arabic appeared toward the end of the 19th century. They were translated from French originals—part of the literature of the Dreyfus controversy. Most of the translations were made by Arab Catholics, Maronites, or other Uniate Christians. The first Arabic translation of the most famous of all anti-Semitic forgeries, the so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was published in Cairo in 1927. This was followed by many other translations—indeed, there are now more translations and editions of the *Protocols* in Arabic than in any other language, and the text is still required reading in departments of comparative religion in a number of Arab universities. There is now also available in Arabic a vast literature of anti-Semitic works, translated or adapted from European originals. These include the Nazi classics that form the basis of a large proportion of current Arab writings on Jews, Judaism, and Jewish history, as well as other writers as diverse as Henry Ford and Karl Marx. The latter's essay on the Jewish question is now enjoying a new popularity in Arabic translation.

The result of all this is that some of the nastiest

inventions of European anti-Semitism have been endorsed in Arab countries at the highest political and academic levels. The late Egyptian President Nasser, in an interview with an Indian journalist on September 28, 1958, cited and recommended the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a guide to Jewish designs, and in another interview of May 1, 1964, with a German neo-Nazi newspaper, dismissed the Holocaust as a myth and expressed his regret at the Nazi defeat. Dr. Hasan Zāzā, professor of Hebrew at 'Ayn Shams University in Cairo, reached the conclusion, apparently on the basis of the Damascus affair of 1840, that the Jews—in defiance of what he admits to be their own laws—use Gentile blood for ritual purposes, and many other Arab writers on Judaism agree.

This approach is found not only in overtly polemical writings, but also in what purports to be scholarly work, concerned not with Israel or Zionism but with Jewish history and religion. The proceedings of the fourth conference of Islamic research, held at Al-Azhar in Cairo in September 1968, are full of these and similar accusations, often expressed in violent terms. Even schoolbooks are affected. A UNESCO commission of three experts, one of them a Turkish Muslim, prepared a report on textbooks used in schools in the UNRWA camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Among the criteria that the commission set was that:

All terms contemptuous of a community taken as a whole should also be prohibited since this, obviously intolerable in itself, can among other consequences lead to the violation of the most sacred rights of the individual. Hence, liar, cheat, usurer, idiot—terms applied to Jews in certain passages, and part of the deplorable language of international anti-Semitism—cannot be tolerated.

Of 127 textbooks examined, the commission recommended on the basis of these criteria that 14 be withdrawn entirely, 65 be used only after modification, and 48 be retained as they were. Among other problems, the commission found that in textbooks on religion and history,

an excessive importance is given to the problem of relations between the Prophet Mohammed and the Jews of Arabia, in terms tending to convince young people that the Jewish community as a whole has always been and will always be the irreconcilable enemy of the Muslim community.

The report was presented to the 82nd session of UNESCO in Paris on April 4, 1969. It was never published.

Lebanon and Jordan are not among the most extreme in these matters. Far less restrained anti-Jewish statements have appeared in Egyptian books, schoolbooks, and media, before and also after the

peace treaty with Israel, not to speak of other more radical and more traditional states, each group with its own distinctive perceptions of relations with the Jews. A characteristic expression of the late Saudi King Faysal's understanding of the Jewish role in history occurs in an interview that was accorded to a widely circulated Egyptian picture magazine and published on August 4, 1972:

Israel has had malicious intentions since ancient times. Its objective is the destruction of all other religions. It is proven from history that they are the ones who ignited the Crusades at the time of Saladin the Ayyubid so that the war would lead to the weakening of both Muslims and Christians. They regard the other religions as lower than their own and other peoples as inferior to their level. And on the subject of vengeance—they have a certain day on which they mix the blood of non-Jews into their bread and eat it. It happened that two years ago, while I was in Paris on a visit, the police discovered five murdered children. Their blood had been drained, and it turned out that some Jews had murdered them in order to take their blood and mix it with the bread that they eat on this day. This shows you what is the extent of their hatred and malice toward non-Jewish peoples.

The Saudi monarch, who used to present copies of the *Protocols* and other anti-Semitic tracts to his visitors, had clearly traveled all of the way from the traditional contempt for the Jew as upstart to the modernized, Westernized nightmare of the Jew as the embodiment of evil. He was not alone in this.

The present-day Arabic reader has at his disposal the whole gamut of anti-Semitic mythology. His perceptions have also been modified by the introduction of European anti-Semitic iconography. Anti-Jewish cartoons, for some time now very common in the Arabic press, draw their themes and stereotypes entirely from Central and Eastern Europe. This is true even of cartoons in fundamentalist Islamic publications. Since there was no native tradition of anti-Jewish caricature, it required some education before readers of Arabic newspapers could be expected to understand the symbols. It would seem that this task of education has now been completed.

The propagation of anti-Semitic themes and notions was not left to chance, nor was it entirely entrusted to Middle Eastern enterprise. Anti-Semitism has been energetically propagated by various European groups. The most important in this century were the Nazis, who from the early 1930's until the defeat of Germany in 1945 devoted great efforts to the spread of anti-Semitic doctrines among the Arabs. Since the fall of the Nazis, some Arab countries have themselves become the major source of anti-Semitic publications, which are distributed all over the world.

OBVIOUSLY, a major element in the rise of Arab anti-Semitism is the Palestine question, and the consequent embitterment of relations between Jews and Arabs everywhere. In its origin this is a political conflict—not a matter of prejudice or bias, or intercommunal or interethnic hostility, but a specific and material conflict between two groups of people both claiming the same place. However, since Zionism and later Israel both happen to be predominantly Jewish, and since there were conveniently accessible Jewish minorities in Arab countries, and since furthermore anti-Semitism provided a ready-made system of themes, images, and vocabulary for attacks on Jews, the temptation was obviously very strong to make use of them. And of course there were skilled and experienced tempters to push them.

Arab leaders have reacted in various ways. Some have eagerly embraced these allies; others have denounced them with indignation; some have done both at the same time. While recognizing the obvious effect of the Palestine question in the deterioration of Arab-Jewish relations and therefore in the position of Jews in the Muslim world generally, its importance should not be exaggerated, in particular not to the neglect or exclusion of other factors. This deterioration is part of a larger change, affecting the general situation in the Muslim world and that of minorities within it. The general worsening of relations and loss of tolerance harmed others besides Jews. But it was worse for Jews because of the Palestine question, and because they were more vulnerable. Jews in Arab countries had, for the most part, been either indifferent or hostile to Zionism, which was seen as a predominantly European movement. The conversion of the Arab Jews to Zionism came later and was, as in some other places, a direct result of persecution.

The process of their conversion was hastened by violence. In the summer of 1940, and again in February 1941, the mufti of Jerusalem, Hāj Amīn al-Husaynī, acting, he said, on behalf of an inter-Arab committee of government and nongovernmental representatives, presented proposals to the government of Germany for German-Arab cooperation to achieve common ends. If the German government would issue a declaration, a draft of which he provided, endorsing the mufti's aims, he could promise them effective Arab support. The earlier draft of the proposed declaration contains this clause, repeated with minor changes in the second:

Germany and Italy recognize the right of the Arab countries to solve the question of the Jewish elements which exist in Palestine and in the other Arab countries, as required by the national and ethnic (*völkisch*) interests of the Arabs, and as the Jewish question was solved in Germany and Italy.

The Germans, for a variety of reasons, never

gave a clear answer to the mufti's requests, but there can be no doubt about the extent of Nazi influence, as expressed in the mufti's draft proposal, in the Arab nationalist camp at that time. Between 1941 and 1948 there were numerous outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Southern Arabia, and North Africa, in which hundreds of Jews were killed or injured, while far greater numbers found their workplaces sacked and their houses destroyed, leaving them homeless and destitute. All these events predated the establishment of the state of Israel and no doubt contributed to some extent to its creation. That, in turn, further undermined the position of Jews in Arab countries, already weakened through their perceived association with the West, and exposed them to a new militancy that leaves no place for those who deviate from the rule.

The result was a massive emigration of Jews from these countries, mostly in the late 40's and early 50's. Of 300,000 Jews in Morocco, some 18,000 remain. Of 55,000 Jews in the Yemen, fewer than

1,000 remain. Of the three major communities of Algeria, Iraq, and Egypt, previously estimated at 135,000, 125,000, and 75,000, respectively, only a few hundred old people remain in each. Even in Turkey, a Jewish community once reckoned at some 80,000 to 90,000 has been reduced by emigration to about 15,000, while in Iran a return to the *dhimma* seems to be the best for which the Jews of that country can hope. Increasing numbers have preferred emigration, either to Israel or to the countries of the West.

There have been many chapters in the long history of the Jewish people. Greek Alexandria was the home of Philo, Babylon of the Talmud, medieval Spain of a rich Hebrew literature; the Jews of Germany and Poland wrote major chapters in modern Jewish history. They have all gone, and only their monuments and their memory remain. The Judeo-Islamic symbiosis was another great period of Jewish life and creativity, a long, rich, and vital chapter in Jewish history. It has now come to an end.

# In Coventry—A Memoir

Dan Jacobson

IT WAS “Kudu” Kent, the master in charge of Standard Five, who set the pack on me. It was one of his specialties. A handsome, flat-faced man, he was much admired by the boys for his youth (compared with the other masters), for his suntan, for his white teeth, for his long legs, for his reputed prowess on the sports field. Even the nickname they had bestowed on him was a sign of their admiration: it referred to the fact that on some legendary hunting expedition he had succeeded in bringing down a Kudu bull, the largest of the South African deer (which in those days had not yet come completely under the protection of the game laws). He had been photographed, like the hero of a boys’ adventure book, kneeling above the beast with a rifle in his hand; subsequently he had made sure that that photograph was passed from hand to hand all over the Junior Quad of the Kimberley Boys High School.

He knew that he was popular, and why he was popular, and he played up to his popularity for all he was worth. One of the ways he did so, strangely enough, was through displays of caprice and cruelty. Thus he made sure that the white gleam of his smile, or the casual, unschoolmasterly warmth and interest he might display in his dealings with this boy or that, or with the boys in general, would be so much the more valued and competed for. Like many teachers, in other words, he behaved toward his class in a “feminine” or coquettish fashion, as if he were some frigid, power-hungry beauty among her suitors: now bestowing a caress, now a wound; now a smile, now a frown; now a mark of concern or even of tenderness which might suddenly be transformed into malice. He never went too far, however, in this kind of coquetry; he took care, that is, never to offend the boys who were themselves, in schoolboy terms, glamorous or powerful. He never tried to humiliate them or to lower the esteem in which he knew them to be held by the other boys. On the contrary, he

sided with them against anyone whom they had decided to persecute. We were all aware of this, too.

There had been a couple of instances of mob savagery against individual boys early in the year; in both cases Kent had not lifted a finger to help the victim. Instead he had taken the hearty, heartless, cravenly self-protective line of accusing the victim of being a “sneak” and a “crybaby.” The first case had been that of a new boy called Hannaway, who had been found guilty by the ring-leaders of the mob of having “Colored blood.” It was also held against him that his father’s shop was in one of the poorer quarters of the town, a district where Cape Coloreds (those of mixed European and African or Asian ancestry) and poor whites lived side by side—a disgusting circumstance in the eyes of boys whose fathers sold shoes and jackets and electrical appliances in the city’s more respectable commercial areas. What made things even worse was that Hannaway senior had a small ice-cream plant in the back of the shop; a few pedal-driven carts with bells used to go around the streets selling the stuff. (“Velvet Ice Cream” was the unfortunate trade name he used.) This ice-cream was said to be “dirty” and “full of typhoid.” On several occasions I saw Hannaway run like a rodent in front of a mob yelling, “Greasy Joe! Greasy Joe!”; the pursuers in their fashion were transported as far beside or beyond themselves as he was in his. On a couple of other occasions I saw him trapped on a bench in a corner of the Quad, shivering convulsively, shrinking in on himself, his eyes hot, his face yellow and mauve in color, while the same cry went up and every feeble lunge he made at an escape was greeted with a shriek of delight and a shove that sent him reeling back on the bench. The uproar was indescribable; yet there was a sinister silence at the heart of it, where Hannaway sat trembling and the shadows of the boys in the ring crossed and recrossed the bench.

After many weeks of such occurrences, Hannaway senior finally appeared in the school to complain about the treatment his son was receiving. Thereupon Kent seized the opportunity to lecture the class about the virtues of “standing up for yourself” and the contempt to be earned by those who “ran crying home to Mama.” Much the same

DAN JACOBSON, who was born in South Africa in 1929, has long made his home in London. His novels include *The Rape of Tamar*, *The Wonder-Worker*, and *The Confessions of Josef Baisz*, and he is also the author of a recent study of the Bible, *The Story of the Stories: The Chosen People and Its God*. The present piece is copyright © 1984 by Dan Jacobson.

lecture was delivered after another boy, Gouws by name, one of the few Afrikaans-speaking boys in the school, had been brought close to a nervous breakdown by his schoolmates' discovering that he had a phobia about the squat, fat, segmented, armored, clawed, bewhiskered, thumb-sized crickets, called *koringkrieks*, which abounded in the uncleared areas of the school grounds. What better could be done with him, then, than to hold him down on the floor and put these creatures down the back of his neck, while he flailed helplessly with all his limbs, and his spine as well, and noises like those of a dog barking emerged from his chest, and tears and snot and spit flew upward from his face?

Each time I saw anything of these torments it was simply because I had come upon them or they had come upon me. My first instinct, every time, was to clear out of the vicinity as rapidly as I could. Of course I had felt myself to be a weakling in doing so, doubly a weakling: once for being utterly unable even to imagine myself joining the surging, yelling, yet curiously businesslike mob as it went about its work (if a score of boys, or more, could do it, why did the spectacle simply make me feel sick?); and once for being utterly unable, at the same time, to go to the aid of the victim—to stand up as best I could to the mob. Who knows, perhaps following either course of action, either joining the mob or defying it, might have protected me from what was to follow? But then again, perhaps neither would have.

FOR myself, the balance between personal advantages and disadvantages had been good enough to get me through four or five years of school without falling afoul of the boys in the class who mattered most. I had never had the security of being one of the class "bulls"; I wasn't strong enough, or good enough at cricket and rugby, nor did I come from the "right" kind of family. (Nothing very grand was involved in that last qualification; all you needed was to have a father who had been long established in business or in one of the professions in town, or who worked in any capacity, even the humblest, for the De Beers diamond mining company, or who had himself gone to the school in bygone days.) I was clever, which told against me, but was also quite good at games; I was slightly built but not "weedy"; I was Jewish but was protected by having two older brothers in the school. During most of the year we had been under the direct care of Kent, my position had appeared in fact to be an especially good one. He liked me, I thought. He liked my essays, anyway.

Then, between one moment and the next, he turned against me; and I was done for. What happened was this. On my arrival at school one morning, I had spent some time fooling around near the bike sheds with a group of boys whom I had found there. None were from my class. They

had been indulging in the ancient pastime of throwing their schoolbags at one another. Unfortunately the site of this game was near two open bins used by the caretaker to incinerate all kinds of rubbish. Rusty, capacious, triangular affairs, they were in fact two earth-moving "pans" donated to the school by that source of all good things in Kimberley, the De Beers Corporation. Needless to say, they were caked with soot. Needless to say, once again, somebody's bag eventually fell into one of them. The game ended at that point. We stood and gazed over the rim of the bin, which came more or less up to our chests. The bag lay on an assortment of charred papers, orange peels, a few tin cans, and other such trash. At length, not because I was under any obligation to the owner of the bag, but simply because it seemed the dashing thing to do, I volunteered to climb into the bin and get the bag out. This feat was duly accomplished. None of the others seemed much impressed by it. When I came out I discovered that my hands and knees (I was wearing the school's regulation navy blue shorts) were black with soot. It was hardly surprising. I went to the lobby at the top end of the Junior Quad, where there were basins and soap and a slimy, communal towel, and did my best to wash them clean. Then the bell rang and I forgot about the whole incident.

Hours later, in the course of some lesson or other, I had to go up to Kent's desk to get an exercise book. I had turned away from him and was walking back to my desk when he said to me in a loud, idle voice, which rang right across the room, "Jacobson, you're absolutely filthy! Don't you ever take a bath?" Then, extending an invitation to the whole class, and making sure that it should be understood as an invitation, he asked, "Have you seen the back of his legs? They're disgusting!" Only then did I comprehend why I had been assailed like this from behind. I looked at the back of my legs. It had never occurred to me that they too might have got filthy in my scramble in and out of the bin. But there my soot-smudged calves were, not quite as black as my knees had been, but dark enough. The boys were getting out of their desks, unrebuked by Kent, and craning their necks to gaze at the spectacle. It was a long way to my desk.

Presently the bell rang. Time for recess. I was expecting to have a pretty rough time once we were released. What I was not expecting was the quasi-formal arraignment that took place immediately outside the classroom door. I walked straight into it: a group of boys waiting for me, more or less in a ring. Only two or three of them spoke, but they were the ones who counted. I remember the neatly combed hair and the utterly invulnerable, somehow aloof, expression on the face of one; the sallow complexion of another, and the eagerness or appetite he betrayed in his manner. The other boys looked on, a few of them cackling

sycophantically from time to time. Why was I so filthy? Why didn't I ever take a bath? What was the big idea, coming to school like that? By dint of shoves and grabs I was made to display the back of my legs to those who hadn't yet seen them. At some point I tried to explain how it was that they had got so dirty, but this only made matters worse. Now everybody knew that I was in the habit of crawling around rubbish bins! At some other point I tried to burst out of the ring, but was hauled back into it and challenged to a fight, in the midst of all the jostling, by the biggest of the "bulls." Of course I wouldn't take up the challenge; then I was said to be not only dirty but "yellow" as well.

I have no idea how long this inquisition went on. What I do know is that by the end of the day an entirely new school experience had begun for me. I had been sent to Coventry. Nobody was to talk to me or to have anything else to do with me. Everyone was to turn his back whenever I approached. At first I didn't understand what was going on—I was genuinely puzzled at the way people appeared to behave in my presence. Then I began to comprehend. Comprehension brought with it shame and incredulity, which filled not just my consciousness but my whole body, from my suddenly naked-seeming ears to the tips of my toes. What was I to do? Where was I to hide? I couldn't believe what was happening; I couldn't believe that it was happening to me; I couldn't come to terms with the untruthfulness of what was being said about me. That my harmless, even quixotic act in jumping into that bin should have had such consequences! At the same time, and in just as impacted and overwhelming a fashion, it seemed to me that I had been found out, the hidden truth about me had been made public, everything I had always known to be wrong or disgraceful about myself had at last become manifest to all. Why else should the whole community have turned against me—literally turned against me, shown me its back, moved away furtively whenever I approached and wherever I walked? To add to all this I was afraid physically, too: afraid of what lay ahead, of the lengths to which the mob might yet go.

In fact, I was spared the kind of treatment that had been meted out to Gouws and Hannaway: at no time was I physically hunted by the mob and brought down, so that things might be done to me when I was helpless on the ground. I did not have the assurance of knowing this, on the first day; nor, on the other hand, could I have guessed at the end of it that what I had been through was just a foretaste of what was to come, for day after day and week after week, until at last the end of term arrived. Such was the power of the "bulls" in the class: a power which they exercised not only on me but also through me, as it were, on the class as a whole. Even now, looking back, I am amazed at the persistence with

which they kept it up. There could not have been more than three or four of them who issued the orders, with a few especially eager hangers-on; but they policed their own injunction zealously and everyone fell in line, including the boys with whom I had been especially friendly beforehand.

THE whole episode must have lasted about six weeks—perhaps eight at the outside—no more. If I say that I was never wholly to "recover" from the misery I then went through, it is not because I cherish it, or wish to exaggerate it. "What does not destroy me," Nietzsche wrote, in tensely self-consoling style, "makes me stronger." Well, no one is a *tabula rasa* at the age of eleven, and all that was strengthened in me were certain preexisting tendencies and patterns of response, most of them of a pretty negative kind: self-doubt (which is hardly what Nietzsche would have had in mind); a susceptibility to the notion that people will always be ready to gang up on me, if given the opportunity to do so; skepticism about my own motives and everyone else's; a kind of primitive but thoroughgoing scorn for those who speak in their books or prayers or speeches as if some mass transformation of the human will or of human institutions might one day produce a race nobler or purer than the one we have, or are. The episode often came to mind in later years when I speculated about how it could have been possible for incomparably greater horrors to take place: about the ever-repeated psychological maneuvers which had to be gone through in innumerable individual minds before the Nazis could put into effect their intention to slaughter the Jews of Europe (a program which began in the very year that the events I am describing took place); and about why the Jews reacted as they did to what was happening to them; and about why those who were neither Nazis nor Jews reacted, or failed to react, as they did. The same was true for the way in which I was to think about some aspects of race relations in South Africa, or about the impulses that make the victims of a hijacking speak so effusively not of their rescuers but of the people who kidnap them and brandish guns under their noses for days on end . . . and so on. Of course it isn't just "them" and what "they" did whom I think of in such contexts, but myself and everything I did. The latter even more, perhaps, since I know it better than the other.

Among some minor, additional lessons I learned then (if I had not known it before) was that an enforced isolation could be almost as varied in its tones and modes as happiness or companionship. This did not make it any the less intolerable. There was, for example, the loneliness I experienced when I was sitting in my desk in the classroom, which was different from that which I experienced outside the classroom, which in turn was different from what I experienced at home.

There I was safe from my classmates and from what they could do to me, but my own determination to say nothing of what I was going through effectively isolated me from my parents and my brothers. Inevitably, I courted some forms of loneliness, precisely so that I could think of them as arising from my own choice, different in some tenuous fashion from the isolation which was being inflicted as a punishment on me. The moment school was let out I raced off home on my bicycle; that way I had the consolation of avoiding being avoided by the others. I would also avoid the possibility of those who were *not* my classmates seeing how I was being treated by them, and perhaps being moved to follow suit. The same applied to my journeys to school: if I weren't with one of my brothers I would dawdle deliberately when I saw anyone from my class ahead of me on the road; or I would cycle up the dusty "sanitary" lanes that ran behind the town's residential streets, in order not to see the others or to be seen by them.

Since I was being treated like a criminal, in other words, I began to behave like a criminal: I became furtive, secretive, a holder-back of the truth even from those at home whose good will toward me I never doubted. I also turned into something resembling an invalid—and this not only because I used every sniffle that affected me, every sprain or graze, to plead to be let off school, and would lie in bed night after night, fervently hoping to wake the next morning with a temperature or a rash. No, I was like an invalid in the sense that I could take none of my movements for granted; all the cunning and caution I could summon up had to go into carrying out the most trivial tasks; everything I did exhausted me. Indeed, one of the clearest memories I have of the whole episode is the effort that was constantly demanded of me: the effort of silence on the one hand, and the effort of speech on the other; the effort of driving myself to school each morning and of getting through the rest of the day; the effort of having to think out my moves several stages ahead in order to outwit my persecutors. Not to speak of the effort of meeting their stares or not meeting them; of noticing or pretending not to notice their movements away from me; of pretending, while the lessons lasted, that I was a school-boy like any other; of looking for a place in the mercilessly naked school grounds where I could eat my sandwiches without my solitariness becoming manifest to all.

In some ways conditions were easiest for me when we were all gathered together in the classroom, participating in the lessons, forbidden to talk to one another; then, I used to think, no one looking at us could have told me apart from the others. For the first and last time in my school life I wanted the lessons to go on longer; I hated the sound of the school bell telling us that it was time for one of the two recesses we had; even the

sound of the bell at the end of the day did not really bring relief, since it meant that I now had to negotiate the passage between home and school. Of course at no time did I speak to Kent of what I was going through. He was responsible for it, first of all, and I knew that I could expect nothing from him in the way of help or contrition. Besides, the looks I sometimes caught from him made me suspect strongly that he had a pretty good idea of what was happening. He was never going to give me the satisfaction, however, of knowing for sure, one way or the other.

AT HOME I preserved my silence simply because I did not want to acknowledge to my family what a miserable pariah and failure I was. No consolation that might have been forthcoming from them would have made up for the pain of admitting to them the condition I was in or of having to turn to them for succor. Thus, at home as well as at school, I learned how close to one another are certain emotions which we ordinarily like to think of as being remote from one another, if not to all intents and purposes mutually exclusive. Shame, I discovered, could be indistinguishable at its roots from pride, and vice versa; the same was true of weakness and a certain kind of stoic reserve or silence. Entrapped within the meshes of emotions like these there lurked also the fear that if my parents did hear of what was happening at school, and of the part Kent had played in it, they would have complained to the headmaster or, if they had not got satisfaction from him, to the governing body of the school. I could not face the thought of it, of any of it: the gossip, the inquiries, the whole school learning of my humiliation, Kent lecturing me about cry-babies, or, for that matter, Kent being lectured at by people more powerful than himself, and thereafter bearing an even bigger grudge against me than before. In a peculiar fashion, therefore, I actually felt protective of him; not because I wished him well, but because by protecting him I would be protecting my own feelings from further exposure or laceration.

Kent was not the only one I protected in order to protect myself. I did the same with some of the boys. This applied especially perhaps to those whom I knew to be unhappy about what was going on, and who would have spoken to me or befriended me if only they had dared. Sometimes it seemed to me worse to find myself among the more kind-hearted of the boys than among the relatively few who enjoyed what they were doing to me, and did it with conviction, with relish, out of an evident belief that in chastising me for being dirty they were certifying themselves as clean, upright, fully accredited members of the community. There was no comfort—quite the reverse—in seeing the meek, secretive gestures of good will sometimes made to me by the other boys, or the mute guilt in the eyes of those who had been my companions

prior to my banishment. If that was as much as they could offer me, if they would speak to me in embarrassed, hesitant fashion only when they knew themselves to be safe from spying eyes, then how alone I really was! Besides, in their looks I could read not merely the shame they felt at their own thoroughly cowed state, but also the fear that I might betray them subsequently by claiming their friendship in public, and thus revealing them to the others as secret backsliders. I did not want to put them through it; still less did I wish to be reminded that all I was for them was an object of furtive pity and an occasion of misgiving. There are boys whose names I have long forgotten but whose sidelong, shamefaced glances, whose stiffened cheeks and pained brows and awkward shoulders, I can still remember vividly; I can remember also the particular places in the school grounds or outside it where such glances came my way, and the spots of sunshine on the inner verandah of the Quad, or the sound of bicycle wheels on a tarred road, that accompanied them.

One surprising feature of the whole performance—more surprising perhaps in retrospect than at the time—was that at no point, so far as I can remember, did it take an anti-Semitic turn. That much must be said to the credit of my persecutors. The fact is especially noteworthy since there were in the school some boys who, at the age of ten or twelve or fourteen, were already accomplished, not to say obsessive, anti-Semites. (All this took place in the second year of World War II, and to the inevitable or “endemic” anti-Semitism which might be expected anywhere and at any time, and especially in a country as racially inflamed as South Africa, there had to be added the effects of years of Nazi propaganda.) Such boys were eaten up by their preoccupation with the Jews, maddened by it, perhaps even—it would be consoling to think—tormented by it, and by their inability to do anything with it other than shout insults at the Jewish boys. Fortunately for me there were none of them in my class. One other interesting circumstance is that so far as I can recall no boys from other classes were ever called on to take part in the boycott; it was as if the class “bulls” were not going to endanger their power by trying to stretch it too thin. In that respect they proved themselves to be cunning tacticians.

IT WOULD be gratifying to my own sense of the dramatic to be able to record that some single act of rebellion on my part or of compunction on the part of my persecutors brought the episode to an end. The trouble is, it would be quite untrue. Nothing of the kind oc-

curred. All that happened was that the term came to an end. For six weeks school ceased to exist: a period which was in itself about as long as my persecution had endured, and which, like it, I perceived almost as if it were a realm of its own, without antecedent or limit. This way of apprehending time seems to come naturally in childhood; we recover it as adults only during passages of illness or other forms of extreme stress.

Nevertheless, when school reassembled, as it inevitably did, I went back to it with much anxiety. We were going to go into a new class and we were to have a new teacher; but I did not know how much difference that would make. What I did know was that I would not be able to endure a renewal of the experience I had been through. If it did all start up again, I would have to act in some way; how, I did not dare to imagine.

IN THE EVENT, my misgivings turned out to have been unwarranted. Nothing happened. Nothing at all. The whole episode had been forgotten by everybody other than myself. Or so it seemed. The boys who had set the class on me greeted me neither with hostility nor with any air of apology. No one accused me of being dirty. As arbitrarily, as nonsensically, as the persecution had begun, it had ceased. A recollection of the blank, anticlimactic arbitrariness of it was to return to me when I set foot on the continent of Europe for the first time, at the age of twenty, knowing that had I been in that very place five years previously I would have been a hunted man, someone condemned to death. Now I was not. The ban had been lifted. That was all there was to it. One thing, though, about myself at the age of eleven which must not go unmentioned was the impulse of craven *gratitude* I felt toward the ringleaders of the mob when I realized that I had indeed been “forgiven.” I can remember sitting in my desk and feeling it go through me like a flush. They liked me! How generous they were! How kind it was of them to readmit me to the class! Then came a flush of another kind, as I realized why I was feeling grateful, and to whom.

As for “Kudu” Kent, the ultimate begetter of the experience I had been through, he left the school to go into the army in the course of that year. He received a commission in an infantry regiment, fought in North Africa, was captured by the Germans, escaped from them in circumstances that won him a decoration for gallantry, and returned to the town at the war’s end as something of a hero. Two years later, though he was then still only in his mid-thirties, he died of a heart attack.

## Deficit Thinking

Melville J. Ulmer

WHAT is the significance of the currently bulging federal deficit, and what should be done about it? Needless to say, in a presidential election year, questions like these take on a partisan tinge. But even *within* each of the two major parties, economists with the same training and skills can confront an identical problem and arrive at directly opposite conclusions. Such is the case with Herbert Stein and Paul Craig Roberts, both Republicans, both former government officials, both authors of recent books that focus with special intensity on the issue of the deficit.\*

The deficit itself, of course, is no small matter, actually tripling during the last two years alone to an all-time peacetime high of 5 percent of the entire gross national product. Stein, in forthright alarm, proposes a prompt and vigorous boost in taxes to deal with it. In his judgment, given the "impracticality" of cutting government spending, the incomes of the productive middle class must be sacrificed on the altar of the profligacies of the past—a strictly logical and yet clearly contentious conclusion. The tax boost he has in mind, to make a dent in the nearly \$200-billion deficit, would necessarily have to be substantial. Others, like Roberts, consider Stein's proposal potentially self-defeating, and in any event it is not one that the Reagan administration is likely to press to its heart just months before the next election. A pledge of stiffer taxes is not among the more enticing benefits that politicians ever offer voters, unless they are expected to fall on some benighted groups outside their own constituencies. Nor might raising taxes be considered advisable, gen-

erally, in the midst of a vigorous, though young and still vulnerable recovery.

Even so, Martin Feldstein, chairman of the President's own Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), has risked his job by suggesting an urgent need for higher taxes. David A. Stockman, director of Reagan's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has been known to express the same sentiment. So has Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker, a Democrat, only more loudly and insistently, and with a hinted threat to tighten the money supply if he does not get his way. The question of what to do about the deficit is thus not subject to easy or definitive answers on narrowly political grounds.

In effect, Stein and many others fear the weight of the deficit because, in their judgment, it "crowds out" private investment in the market for loanable funds. Society's savings are limited. Financing the deficit, as things have been going, requires an ever larger share. In the short run, if crowding out intensifies, currently high interest rates would run even higher, and so, perhaps, would inflation, washing out domestic investment and heralding a perhaps calamitous recession. The longer run, these economists assert, promises more fundamental damage, retarding the extension and improvement of industrial capacity and thereby cutting productivity and living standards in general.

Added to all this is the inscrutability of the widely feared "gnomes of international finance." In recent years, foreign investment in the U.S. has conveniently supplied a growing share of our financing needs. It partly supports the budgetary deficit as well as the current imbalance in our international trade. The apparent lure has been the image of America as a haven

of safety in a troubled world, offering a relatively subdued inflation, attractive interest and profit returns, and a firmly valued dollar. But what if the perception of European and Japanese financiers changes to fears of a revived inflation and a plunge in the international value of the dollar? A flight of funds back home would throw the weight of the federal deficit wholly on our own domestic resources, raising the specter of spiking interest rates and at least a temporary business convulsion.

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS, who served as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in 1981-82, and his "supply-side" colleagues consider such fears of the deficit either exaggerated or wholly imaginary—demonstrating once again that economic facts and reasoning are flexible enough to accommodate flatly opposing interpretations. Roberts's riposte to Stein, and to others sharing his fiscal sentiments, is that they misinterpret the relevant theory and ignore the relevant facts.

The orthodox economists, Roberts says—meaning Stein and his supporters—are, despite their politically conservative bent, prisoners of the old and partly discredited doctrine of John Maynard Keynes. According to the standard Keynesian framework, changes in taxes affect the economy only through increases or decreases in disposable personal incomes, and therefore through the raising or lowering of consumer purchases. But to Roberts and other "supply-side" theorists, a boost in tax rates actually constitutes "a three-pronged attack" on economic growth: it not only cuts "disposable income and therefore buying," but also reduces "incentives to work and to invest." Roberts considers the last two effects critical.

Higher marginal tax rates, in his view, reduce the effective profit margins available to business and dis-

MELVILLE J. ULMER is professor of economics at the University of Maryland and the author of numerous professional books and articles.

\* *Presidential Economics*, by Herbert Stein, Simon & Schuster, 414 pp., \$16.95; *The Supply-Side Revolution*, by Paul Craig Roberts, Harvard University Press, 317 pp., \$18.50.

courage entrepreneurship. They lessen the net returns to saving, investment, and legitimate risk-taking. They brighten the attraction of leisure and idleness by lowering their "alternative cost"—the skimpier *after-tax* wages available if these higher tax rates work. Ironically, they expand the rewards for illegal activities and wasteful tax shelters. They therefore restrain legitimate production and economic progress. More important for present purposes, higher tax rates would actually *reduce* the total revenue collected by government, simply because of the diminished incomes on which they are levied. Paradoxically, Roberts concludes, enactment of a tax increase such as Stein proposes would end by enlarging the budgetary deficit instead of reducing it.

Within the Reagan administration, Roberts propagandized vigorously in behalf of the key role of business incentives, and he commends for their support Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, and the President himself. At the same time he repeatedly chides Feldstein and Stockman for what he deems their influential opposition. Their underestimation of the incentive effect, he says, accounts as well for their underestimation of the benefits of Reagan's three-stage tax reduction, prescribed in the Economic Recovery Act of 1981. With Feldstein and Stockman particularly in mind, he writes:

As the recovery the President had been told could not take place gathered steam, Reagan was confirmed in his opinion that OMB and CEA were too pessimistic about his policies. His advisers had told him that the deficits would keep inflation high, but the inflation rate had collapsed. They had told him that the deficits would keep the interest rates high, but a fantastic rally began in the financial markets. They had told him there would be no recovery, but one appeared. They had told him it would be weak and faltering, but it grew in strength.

Such experiences, as well as events since then, suggest strongly that Roberts was right in appraising the likely effects, at least the immediate ones, of the President's "supply-side" tax cut. The business recov-

ery itself helped to dissipate the more conventional worries. The federal deficit declined significantly as the upturn strengthened, a development consistently unreported in the press. Automatically, government's tax revenues increased while legislated outlays for the unemployed and the poor subsided. Nor did the widely anticipated horrors of "crowding-out" materialize. With swelling sales, the nation's corporations were able to finance their capital needs *internally*—through undistributed profits and recently authorized accelerated depreciation. In addition, the White House concocted a provisional economy measure, intended to save \$50 billion annually over the next three years.

Although all this would still leave a formidable deficit, pressure on the President to take more drastic and politically awkward action noticeably eased. An air of emergency, although diligently stirred by Democratic rivals, grew more difficult to sustain. Increasingly, the Federal Reserve's threat to avoid "overheating" by squeezing the money supply seemed merely spiteful.

STILL, neither Stein, Feldstein, Stockman, nor Volcker altered his morose fiscal theme. The first two of these gentlemen are ranked among the nation's most distinguished social scientists; Stockman, although notorious for erratic public statements, is an acknowledged budgetary expert; Volcker, an astute central banker, is reputed to have few, if any, peers around the world. So one must suppose that looming ahead, in the somewhat more distant future, are some truly menacing dangers.

The scenario for that supposition runs as follows. Ideally, in order to avoid a steadily mounting national debt, the budgetary surpluses enjoyed in prosperity, when government revenues are high, ought to offset the deficits unavoidably generated in recession. But we are as far from achieving a surplus in the present prosperity as the United Nations is from assuring an everlasting peace. Hence, as far as one can see ahead, a substantial deficit will persist unless some vigorous action is taken.

Now a growing national debt is a universally recognized symbol. It

mirrors a struggle, ongoing everywhere in the democratic world, between government and private enterprise. It means that together, the two spend more than the economy produces, at prevailing prices. Moreover, this is a contest that government inevitably wins, since it can always borrow, no matter how high the interest rate may be, or even print money. Thus, so long as deficits survive, the private sector will more and more be stunted while the public sector grows. The disease is universally observable, only slowed down by the Thatchers and the Reagans. That is the real concern of Stein, Feldstein, Stockman, and Volcker, conservatives or centrists all.

This does not mean, necessarily, that their proposed solution is right. As mentioned earlier, Stein and the rest would banish the deficit with a huge tax boost. The result would entail, as Stein honestly relates, a squeeze in the population's level of living, as measured by the productive resources available for its use. A side effect would be the expansion of bureaucratic regulation and control. Nor—and Stein does not disclose this—is that likely to be the final settlement of the conflict. As President Reagan observed, "Give them more taxes, and volunteers on the Hill will find ways to spend it."

OF COURSE there are other possibilities. Although almost all economists, aside from radicals, would accept Stein's diagnosis, probably most conservatives and many liberals too would reject his prescription. Certainly Roberts would. He would attack government's encroachments directly, and the deficit as well, by cutting public expenditures. But how? There have always been answers of some kind to that question. Now, in the months since both the Roberts and Stein books were published, new and promising evidence has appeared that powerfully supports the feasibility of a radical reduction of the federal government's vast outlays without reducing its legitimate services.

Nearly everyone has heard of the "Grace Report" (named after its director, J. Peter Grace, chairman and chief executive officer of the huge conglomerate bearing his fam-

ily name), but it is doubtful that its significance is generally understood. Its conclusions are based on an exhaustive study of the actual activities of government's almost countless "public servants," including particularly the results of their acts and the efficiency with which they are performed. The findings occupy 47 separate volumes, 23,000 pages in all. In intricate, documented detail, the report specifies 2,748 instances of costly mismanagement in the federal government, which it calls "the worst-run enterprise in America." A random sample of the abuses, as cited in the best summary of the report I have found,\* include:

- The Health and Human Services Department has been paying Medicare benefits to 8,500 dead people.

- The Army spends \$4.20 to issue each payroll check, compared to the private-sector cost of \$1. This wastes \$40 million a year.

- A Mississippi supplier bought gravity timers from the sole supplier for \$11 each and sold them to the Navy for \$256—a 2,237 percent markup.

- The absence of up-to-date mailing lists in the Government Printing Office wastes \$96 million a year in dispatching free publications (mainly for the Agriculture Department) to the wrong addresses.

- Though the Urban Mass Transportation administration spent \$10 million to buy new computers to keep track of the \$25 billion in grants it hands out annually, the agency has been unable to close its accounting books since 1979.

- Government pensions are twice as generous as private ones, and military pensions are 600 percent higher than those in the private sector. In addition, a very large proportion of government employees are "overclassified."

In all, the Grace commission estimates that \$424 billion over three years can be saved by correcting these and similar managerial failures. It may be charged that the claim is overly optimistic, but even if only half the advertised savings proved achievable, the federal deficit would cease to be a worry. Notice, too, that the report focuses exclusively on *management* failures, leaving services intact. Others, like the economist Murray Weidenbaum, have spent professional lifetimes weeding out services with benefits far below their costs.

FINDING ways to cut the budget, of course, is not the same as actually cutting it. One requirement is a line-item veto and impoundment authority for the President. A sec-

ond is a new set of civil-service rules for a valid merit system, including greater freedom to hire and fire. A third is periodic executive checks on verifiable efficiency maintenance. A fourth is a sensible balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution. None of these is impossible. The last and one or more of the others are already in practice in most state governments. Above all, essential for inspiring federal action is an alerted public determination with a leader eager to respond.

True, a drive for government economy can be traced back to George Washington, the only President who did not blame his problems on a predecessor. But we live, to put it mildly, in an entirely different fiscal world these days. Soon, if present trends continue, government at all levels will be taking the better half of every dollar the average citizen earns. For the immediate outlook, unless a prompt and energetic course is taken, we may expect our politicians to exercise their habitual generosity—with other people's money—and we may also expect the rising taxes that Herbert Stein and others recommend to finance it.

\* "Peter Grace Knows," Edward Meadows, *National Review*, March 9, 1984.

## Fiction

### The Sunshine Girls

Joseph Epstein

I DO NOT have the attention span to sustain a lengthy depression, but I have of late been reading two novelists who do: Renata Adler and Joan Didion. I think of them as the

JOSEPH EPSTEIN is the editor of the *American Scholar* and our regular fiction critic. A new volume of his essays, *Plausible Prejudices*, will be published early next year.

Sunshine Girls, largely because in their work the sun is never shining. If weather reports were offered in novels, in their novels the forecast would almost always be gray, mostly cloudy, chill winds, with a strong chance of rain. They seem, these two writers, not really happy unless they are sad. They keep, to alter the line from an old song, a frown on their page for the whole modern

age. Muriel Spark once wrote an interesting book entitled *Girls of Slender Means*. Miss Adler and Miss Didion are slender women who write slender books heavy with gloom. Let us look, then, to their means as novelists in the hope of discovering to what end they lead us.

Along with their gloom, Miss Adler and Miss Didion share an expertise at self-promotion, albeit of a

subtle kind. The New Criticism used to advise avoiding the author and concentrating on the work, but this was before the advent of personal journalism and the author's publicity interview. Both Miss Adler and Miss Didion send themselves out to the world as nervous, rather fragile characters. "She scrutinizes and edits her speech ceaselessly," writes a reporter, interviewing Miss Adler for the cultural pages of the *New York Times*, "cutting off thoughts with 'Oh, that's a blind alley,' or 'No, that's not true.' And faintly but noticeably, her hands often quiver." Miss Didion, in such works as her recent *Salvador*, makes plain her difficulty with migraines, is usually photographed in sun glasses, writes about the nightmarish quality of publicity tours.

Two delicate ladies, one might think. But if so, what is Miss Adler doing so regularly as a subject in *Women's Wear Daily*, her single gray braid over her shoulder, or as subject of the fashion photographer Richard Avedon, while Miss Didion, who has written big-money screenplays, apparently holds her own on the coast among some fellows who, as they say out there, "play hard ball"? Depressed these women may be, nervous and fragile they may seem, I nonetheless take them to be two tough cookies.

Of the two, Renata Adler is the less practiced novelist. She has written, in fact, two novels but no narratives. *Speedboat*, her first novel, and *Pitch Dark*, her second, are both composed for the most part of short, journal-like entries, which, in the modernist spirit, a reader has rather to assemble on his own. *Speedboat*, published in 1976, was much praised; it won the Ernest Hemingway Award for best first novel of the year in which it was published. Reading it today, one notices certain affinities with the work of Ann Beattie: a flatness of expression meant to convey a deep spiritual fatigue. On the formal level, the novel seems Barthelmystically influenced, though without Barthelme's intellectual playfulness. Here is a characteristic passage:

A young professor from Iowa, who was in the city for a lecture series on Wordsworth and the Lake Poets, spoke of his closeness to his own students, with several of

whom he had had affairs, although he did not believe, in the academic context, in shacking up. He was preoccupied with his brightest student, a girl, with whom, during office hours, he engaged in—he wished there was an Anglo-Saxon word for it—fellatio. I said I thought it was sort of a metaphor for education, wasn't it. Then I thought I had gone too far. But no. He said, "Exactly." We all watched the "Eleventh Hour News," which went on, of course, at the Twelfth Hour. Jim and I drove out to the country. It was very late. We stopped for coffee at an all-night dairy-and-diner on the way. A man got out of a truck, came in, ordered a milkshake, put his wallet on the counter, and mumbled something. Then he left, looking angry. "He asks me for a package of rubbers," the man behind the counter said. "I mean, this is a dairy." When our car broke down near the highway exit to the farm, a boy with a sign reading BOSTON trotted over. He thought we were slowing to give him a lift.

Miss Adler is not telling a story in *Speedboat*; instead she is trying to create a feeling through the thoughts, incidents, and odd happenings that occur to the presence at the center of her book, Jen Fain, who is a working journalist also teaching a film course at a school that resembles the City University of New York. The feeling she is trying to create is one of dislocation, disorientation, depression. "There doesn't seem to be a spirit of the times," Jen Fain remarks on the second page of the book. Miss Adler, though, will soon enough supply one. On that same page she has her character remark, "I think sanity, however, is the most profound moral option of our time." And at the bottom of the page, awaking at the apartment of one of her men friends, she is told, "Just stay here. *Angst* is common." We are, you might say, off and limping.

*Manhattan Transfer* John Dos Passos called his novel of New York life in the early 1920's; *Manhattan Transference* Renata Adler's account of New York life in the early 1970's might be called, for even though Miss Adler is no lover of therapeutic culture, the world she describes in *Speedboat* is a highly

neurotic one. "Sometimes it seems that this may be a nervous breakdown—sleeping all day, tears, insomnia at midnight, and again at four A.M. Then it occurs to me that a lot of people have it." In *Speedboat* disconnection is a way of life. Rats roam the halls; a Doberman pinscher attacks an old woman. Jen Fain reports: "I knew a deliverer of flowers who, at Sixty-ninth and Lexington, was hit by a flying suicide. Situations simply do not yield to the most likely structures of the mind." And: "There are some days when everyone I see is a lunatic." These passages pile up, and all are written, in the spiritual if not the grammatical sense, in the passive voice.

Having said all this, I must go on to say that I do not find *Speedboat* boring. It ought to be, but it isn't. Perhaps it isn't because, though the book offers none of the traditional pleasures of the novel, it does offer pleasures of a different kind. When it begins to hum, Miss Adler's is a lively mind, which throws off interesting insights. "Lonely people," she writes, "see double entendres everywhere." In a brilliant passage she talks about what she calls "the Angry Bravo," which is what goes on when, in her example, an audience cheers *No, No, Nanette* when in fact behind their cheers is rage at *Hair* or whatever the going triumph of the day is. She is also clever on the unseriousness of certain artists and intellectuals. In a scene in which no names are given, an Indian lady whom I take to be Mrs. Gandhi is told by a poet whom I take to be Allen Ginsberg, "I think in this country we need to disburden ourselves of our, our burden of rationality." To which Miss Adler offers the capping comment: "He sat down. It did not seem exactly India's problem."

THE world depicted in *Speedboat* is that of unattached youngish people for whom money is not a serious problem but finding a purpose in life is. They I won't say bound but at least crawl into one another's beds, less it seems out of passion than out of the need for comfort and solace against a cold world. They are distanced from life. Boredom is among their deadliest enemies.

They have endless time to spend thinking about themselves. ("‘Self-pity’ is just sadness, I think, in the pejorative," says Miss Adler’s Miss Fain.) Therapy is no help. "In every city, at the same time, therapists earned their living by saying, ‘You’re too hard on yourself.’" There is a slightly frenetic stylishness about their lives. "Elaine’s was jammed"; a man invents a drink called "Last Mango in Paris." Nothing quite holds. Jen Fain avers: "The radical intelligence in the moderate position is the only place where the center holds." But of those who write or argue or say that the center will not hold, I always wonder how they know they are standing in the center—or anywhere near it.

It doesn’t take long for *Speedboat* to run out of gas. The book provides no forward motion, nothing in the way of momentum. In a snippet of conversation reported in one of Miss Adler’s paragraphs, a man says: "Janine, you know I’m very tired of your *aperçus*." So in time does one grow tired of Miss Adler’s, which, in a book without any narrative force, could, any one of them, as easily appear on page 14 as on page 203. Cause and effect, narrative order, nothing seems to matter. "It all ends in disaster anyway." But then Miss Adler is forthright about not having a story to tell. Toward the close of *Speedboat*, she writes: "There are only so many plots. There are insights, prose flights, rhythms, felicities. But only so many plots."

Friend, here’s the bad news: you want to call yourself a novelist, you’re going to have to find a plot.

*Pitch Dark*,\* Renata Adler’s recent novel, does appear to be setting out to tell a story: that of the break-up of an eight-year love affair between another journalist, Kate Ennis, and a married man referred to as Jake. But the story turns out not to be much of a story. As the dust-jacket copy has it, ". . . *Pitch Dark* moves into new realms of feeling." This book, too, peels off into aperçuistical paragraphs; it is interested in making disconnections. It is about, as the narrator of this non-narration says, "my state of mind." This second book of Miss Adler’s is more modernist, more avant-garde, in in-

tention than *Speedboat*. The practical consequence is that, within its pages, more puzzles are offered, more elaborate games are played.

Like all contemporary works of modernist intention, *Pitch Dark* is highly self-reflexive—that is, it often talks about itself. Thus, two-thirds through the book Miss Adler writes:

But will they understand it if I tell it this way?

Yes, they will. They will surely understand it.

But will they care about it?

That I cannot guarantee.

The way that *Pitch Dark* is told is aslant, through indirection. "Do I need to stylize it, then, or can I tell it as it was?" Miss Adler stylizes it, in my view. At the forefront of her book is the affirmation that stories can no longer be told. "For a woman, it is always, don’t you see, Scheherazade. For a man, it may be the Virginian. There he goes, then, striding through the dust of midday toward his confrontation. Here I am, of an evening, wondering whether I can hold his interest yet a while."

Throughout *Pitch Dark* lines repeat, meant to convey a refrain-like resonance. "But you are, you know, you were, the nearest thing to a real story to happen in my life," is one such line; "Did I throw the most important thing perhaps, by accident, away?" is another. We cannot know for certain who is saying these lines, Kate or Jake. But the lines recur, as do, among others, these two: "The world is everything that is the case," which is from Wittgenstein, and "And in the second place because," which is the first line of a Nabokov story. Both these lines are there to establish the modernity of Miss Adler’s narrator’s mind as well as to establish the modernity of her own intention in this book. Of the Wittgenstein line, an epigrammatic couplet by the poet Donald Hall seems particularly pertinent here:

The world is everything that is the case.

Now stop your blubbing and wash your face.

For there is a certain high-tone blubbing going on in *Pitch Dark*. In its pages Miss Adler has the portentousness knob turned all the

way up. "As much as this is the age of crime, after all, this is the century of dislocation," Kate Ennis notes. "Not just for journalists or refugees; for everyone." As for the novel’s weather report, it is given on page 79: "I stand, in pitch dark now, and in heavy rain."

Miss Adler never does get around to telling the story of Kate Ennis’s long love affair with Jake. Instead she shows the sad after-effects of its break-up. Accounts of events, she believes, are lies. What is important are moods, feelings, symbols. So we are given an account of a raccoon who slowly dies of distemper on the stove of Kate Ennis’s country house. Is this meant to stand in for the symbolic death of her love affair? So we are given a lengthy, deliberately paranoid account of a trip through Ireland. Is this meant to stand in for Kate Ennis’s feeling of utter disorientation after the prop of her love affair is pulled out from under her? So the same lines repeat and resound throughout the book. Miss Adler succeeds in giving her novel a highly claustral feeling. Reading it one feels rather as if one is being asked to play handball in an empty but very small closet.

BLEAK, psychologically inconclusive, bereft of the normal pleasures of storytelling, *Pitch Dark* has nonetheless enjoyed a pretty good run in both the popular press and from critics. In part, I suspect, this derives from the autobiographical atmosphere of the novel. In the course of an adulatory piece about her in *New York* magazine Miss Adler implied—and perhaps more than implied—that the love affair that she has not really written about in *Pitch Dark* is one that she herself has gone through. Then there is a celebrity sheen playing about the book’s pages. Kate Ennis is often aloft, en route to one or another island; in Ireland she stays at the house of a former American ambassador to that country. There is also the attraction of gossip. "One morning, in the early nineteen-eighties, Viola Teagarden filed a suit in a New York State court against Claudia Denny for libel. Also named as defendants were a public television station and a talk-

\* Knopf, 144 pp., \$12.95.

show host." We all know who Viola and Claudia are, do we not? Withholding such obvious names is a fine advance on name-dropping.

As for the critical appreciation of *Pitch Dark*, here Miss Adler has what I think of as the moral minority on her side—that select group of critics who worry about not lending approval to avant-garde endeavor. Roger Shattuck, for example, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, has remarked that "Adler has created in *Pitch Dark* a sense of form that could be called cubist." Professor Shattuck plays that old shell game of modern criticism, switching genres, in which the critic has to guess under which genre the work lies. "Adler, like many of her contemporaries, abjures fusion, practices simple removal," he writes. "The resulting minimalist genre should properly not be called a novel, for it answers radically different expectations, brings other rewards." Better yet, the book has allowed Professor Shattuck to erect what he calls "the innarratability principle," which has to do with the inability—or, more precisely, unwillingness—of certain modern writers to tell their story straight out.

But to return to the old, perhaps boring, narratability principle, would it be too rude to suggest that Miss Adler has let slip away an extremely interesting story? The story of being a married man's mistress, told from the point of view of the mistress, is after all neither a common nor an unpromising one. What is it about women who enter into lengthy affairs with married men? What do they have to gain? What is it they are afraid of? Why are they so ready to put themselves almost automatically in second place or below? But then this is a story Renata Adler, given her view that accounts of incidents are lies and that narrative contains the seeds of its own falsity, could never tell. She is among that band of contemporary writers who evidently do not agree with Oscar Wilde's statement: "It must be our faith that there is nothing that cannot be said with words."

JOAN DIDION, my second Sunshine Girl, is vastly superior as a novelist to Renata Adler. To begin with, she really is a novelist—that is,

she has no bias against telling stories and she is interested in lives outside her own. Her vision is dark, her views are bleak, but she is richly talented. That she is a novelist to the bone became clear a little more than halfway out in her first novel, *Run River* (1963), where the book's heroine, Lily Knight McClelland, finds herself seated next to a sailor on a Greyhound bus from San Francisco:

From San Francisco to Vallejo she sat next to a sailor who was going to meet his girl in Salt Lake City. She lived with her folks in Salt Lake but Frisco, he explained, was their lucky town. They had met there, in a gin mill on Market Street, four days before he shipped out in 1943. When she promised to wait had been the A-1 moment in his life, and the second A-1 moment had been a week before on the U.S.S. *Chester* when he got his first sight in two years of the Golden Gate Bridge. . . . Lily began to cry, struck by the superiority of his appreciations to her own, and the sailor said wait a minute, hold your horses, it wasn't sad, honey, it was like women crying at weddings. . . . When the sailor got off at Vallejo to wait for the Salt Lake express Lily wished him good luck and watched him covertly through the window. He was sitting on his duffel bag reading a comic book and eating a Milky Way, and she wanted to get off the bus and give him her garnet ring for his girl, but did not know how to go about it.

*Run River* is set in the countryside above Sacramento among the families of the landed gentry and is the only novel I know, since those of John Steinbeck, to present life in California with the kind of density of detail that makes it seem real. It takes in three generations; it talks about Dekes at Stanford and Pi Phis at Berkeley and the pre-World War II days of convertibles and Glenn Miller albums. The range of human types is wide, not least interesting among them the father of Lily's husband, of whom Miss Didion writes: "Everett had once explained that his father referred to all Mexicans and to most South Americans—including the President of Brazil, who had once been entertained on the river—as goddamn wetbacks and to all Orien-

tals as goddamn Filipinos. . . . Easterners fell into two groups: goddamn pansies and goddamn Jews."

At the heart of the novel is a tragic love between a husband and wife. This love is made tragic by the wife's penchant for lapsing into rather empty affairs, one of which ends in a murder of one of her lovers by her husband. The plot begins with the murder, flashes back for the better part of the book, and closes on the very real if highly complex love between husband and wife. Published when Miss Didion was only twenty-nine, *Run River* has something of the feel of Faulkner to it—"I think nobody owns land until their dead are in it," one character says—but rather good Faulkner.

A NOTE of despair plays through *Run River* yet somehow does not take over the book. The density of novelistic detail covers it over, the devotion to complexity of presentation lends it an affirmative feeling. But Joan Didion, in her next three novels, has not returned to density of detail, and complexity has become, in her work, less something to demonstrate than to talk about. Her second novel, *Play It As It Lays* (1971), is her Hollywood book, but it might have been more accurately entitled *Fear and Trembling, and the Sickness Called the West Coast*. The philosophy behind it has been called, I believe, freeway existentialism.

Maria (pronounced Mar-AY-ah), the character at the center of *Play It As It Lays*, is a film actress whose career is in eclipse and whose marriage to a coming young director is shot. She has a daughter in a mental institution, has had an abortion, is on barbiturates. "From my mother," she announces early in the novel, "I inherited my looks and a tendency to migraine. From my father I inherited an optimism which did not leave me until recently." Along with migraine, she suffers dread. She feels the "peril, the unspeakable peril, in the everyday." Looking for some order in life, she finds none. Instead her portion in life is unrelieved, immitigable anxiety. "All along she expected to die, as surely as she had expected that planes would crash if she boarded them in bad spirit, as un-

questionably as she believed that loveless marriage ended in cancer of the cervix and equivocal adultery in fatal accidents to children. Maria did not particularly believe in rewards, only in punishments, swift and personal."

With *Play It As It Lays* Miss Didion acquired, as a novelist, a new in-group: those people who no longer believe in cause and effect, who feel, as a knowing Hollywood figure puts it to Maria, that they know something because "we've been out there where nothing is." Or, as Maria herself says, on the final page of the novel: "I know something Carter never knew, or Helene, or maybe you. I know what 'nothing' means, and keep on playing." Along with nothing, Miss Didion knows a thing or two about the Hollywood life about which she writes. She knows how agents think and talk; she knows the distinction between a tan acquired at a health club and one acquired during an entire life spent in season. Yet the question arises, why would a writer be drawn to the subject of a rather inarticulate young woman having a nervous breakdown in expensive surroundings? The inadequate answer is, I fear, because she is a Sunshine Girl, drawn to the dark and the hopeless in human affairs.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS once said that what Americans want is a tragedy with a happy ending. But I wonder if that remark doesn't require being amended to read that what Americans want, or at least those who take pleasure in the novels of Miss Adler and Miss Didion, is sadness in plush circumstances. Miss Didion's third novel, *A Book of Common Prayer* (1977), is set among the ruling family in a country called Boca Grande—a country with no history and where everyone lives in cinderblock houses. The story is told by one Grace Strasser-Mendana, a North American trained as an anthropologist who studied under Kroeber and worked with Lévi-Strauss but who has lost her faith in her own method, "who stopped believing that observable activity defined anthropos." She married into Boca Grande's ruling family, and is now dying, at a fairly leisurely pace, of cancer. She has also, she says, "been for fifty of

my sixty years a student of delusion." The story she has to tell is about Charlotte Bogart Douglas, whose eighteen-year-old daughter Marin is a revolutionary student on the run from the FBI. Charlotte has come to Boca Grande to await the arrival of her daughter—or, as the narrator puts it, "located herself at the very cervix of the world, the place through which a child lost to history must pass."

With *A Book of Common Prayer* we are in V. S. Naipaul country, the Third World in turmoil and collision with Western things it can live neither with nor without. There is a hotel in which nothing works, a French-named restaurant serving wretched food, swimming pools without chlorine, while off in the mountains the guerrillas may or may not be forming for attack. Except that, unlike Naipaul, Miss Didion is playing this subject for dark laughs. Although she scores greatly off the grotesque right-wing family that rules Boca Grande, a family that stages various coups against itself, she does not do so from a left-wing perspective. Charlotte Bogart's first husband is a left-wing academic intellectual, her second husband a radical lawyer roughly cut from the model of William Kunstler, yet the second husband can say to the first: "Something I've never been able to understand is how you happen to know more Trotskyists than Trotsky did." Agents provocateurs appear in Boca Grande, but "the main mark they leave is to have provided employment for the many other people required to follow them around and tap their telephones." No, the politics of this novel are neither of the conventional right-nor left-wing variety. They are more radical than either; they are the politics of despair.

Here the visions of Renata Adler and Joan Didion begin to mesh—so much so that one could gently lift sentences from *A Book of Common Prayer* and insert them into *Speedboat* or *Pitch Dark*, or vice versa, without, I suspect, anyone noticing. For example: "I am less and less sure that this story has been one of delusion." Or: "What an odd notion it was that fiction was just a matter of getting facts completely, implausibly wrong." Or: "I am less and less convinced that the word

unstable has any useful meaning. . . ." Or: "I guess I'm just neurotic." The first and third sentences are Miss Didion's, the second and fourth Miss Adler's. Despair, in the contemporary novel, doesn't have a great deal of range: it speaks, you might say, in one voice.

One up on "The Waste Land," Miss Didion's novels usually end with both a bang and a whimper. Charlotte Bogart Douglas is killed in yet another of Boca Grande's habitual coups d'état. The narrator reports: "The moment and circumstances of her arrest are matters of record but the moment and circumstances of her death remain obscure. I do not even know which side killed her, who held the Estadio Nacional at the moment of death." One had scarcely anticipated less. But in the end one feels as Keats reported feeling upon viewing a painting by Benjamin West entitled "Death on the Pale Horse": ". . . in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness."

*Democracy*,\* Joan Didion's most recent novel, is, as its narrator, a woman calling herself Joan Didion, calls it, a "novel of fitful glimpses." It is Miss Didion's richest novel since *Run River*. By richest I mean that there are riches on every page: lovely details, sharp observations, risky but always interesting generalizations, real information—many of the things that I, for one, read novels in the hope of discovering. "Let the man build you a real drink," one character says to another, and with that single sentence, a sentence of a kind for which Miss Didion has a splendid knack, she calls up a whole way of life, in this instance that of the business-class country-club stage of culture.

Miss Didion can build you a real character, too, and *Democracy*, slender though it is as a novel, is filled with interesting characters, major and minor. Of Billy Dillon, the administrative assistant to Harry Victor, the husband of the heroine of *Democracy*, a left-wing politician who made an abortive run for the Presidency during the Vietnam war years, the demograph-

\* Simon & Schuster, 234 pp., \$13.95.

ics of whose "phantom constituency were based on comfort and its concomitant uneasiness"—of this Billy Dillon, Miss Didion writes: "Killer mick, Harry always said about Billy Dillon, an accolade." Jack Lovett, a high-rolling international operative who early understood "war itself as a specifically commercial enterprise," is a man of "a temperamental secretiveness, a reticence that had not so much derived from [his] occupation as led him to it."

AT THE center of *Democracy* is Inez Victor, the wife of Harry and the lover of Jack Lovett and the most interesting of Joan Didion's female characters. A daughter of the rich business class in Hawaii, beautiful, beautifully connected, she worked after college as a docent at the National Gallery, an under-editor of *Vogue*, put in a year at Parke-Bernet. With Inez Victor we are of course in the world of *Women's Wear Daily* and *Rolling Stone*, the celebrity world of the beautiful and the bored. Hers is a name that crops up with a fair regularity in the Style section of the New York *Times* or Washington *Post*. She is a woman who has everything but happiness. Her husband refers to her "quite unpalpable unhappiness." Miss Didion notes: "In retrospect she seemed to have been most happy in borrowed houses, and at lunch." Like all Joan Didion's heroines, she has a wide "capacity for passive detachment." (Charlotte Bogart Douglas, in *A Book of Common Prayer*, feels a sense of "separateness," which is much the same thing; Lily Knight McClelland, in *Run River*, feels perpetually disconnected; and Maria, in *Play It As It Lays*, feels nothing but all of the above.) But Inez Victor's passive detachment, in Miss Didion's hands, can render interesting effects:

Inez said the 3:45 A.M. flight from Honolulu to Hong Kong was exactly the way she hoped dying would be.

Dawn all the way.

*Democracy* is doing two things at once. It is telling the love story of Inez Victor and Jack Lovett, and it is providing an account of the fraudulence of public life, in its political and celebrity realms, and both are subtly done. Its criticism

of left-wing politics, in the person of Harry Victor, is devastating. As Jack Lovett says, "You people really interest me. . . . You don't actually see what's happening in front of you. You don't see it unless you read it. You have to read it in the New York *Times*, then you start talking about it. Give a speech. Call for an investigation. Maybe you can come down here in a year or two, investigate what's happening tonight."

But it won't do to slip Miss Didion into a political box. She doesn't much like what has happened in America. Yet she doesn't much like it anywhere else either. Set for the most part during the Vietnam years, her novel, perhaps intended to bring Henry Adams's novel *Democracy* (1880) up to date, dwells on the decline of American power and the decay of American life. But then Miss Didion is, by temperament, drawn to decline and decay.

Good as *Democracy* is, one cannot help feeling it would have been better if Miss Didion had left out the character called Joan Didion, the novelist. Throughout the novel, this Joan Didion drops in to tell you about the difficulties and limitations of narrative. "This is a hard story to tell," she says at one point; "I am resisting narrative here," she says at another. "Consider any of these things long enough," she remarks, "and you will see that they tend to deny the relevance not only of personality but of relevance." There is a sense in which, because of the fragmented way she tells her story, Miss Didion must have felt called upon to bring her own novelistic problems into the book. Yet one also feels that she is pleased by the modernist note that this device demonstrates.

Why make narrative seem so difficult? The trick used to be to make telling a story as straight and smooth as one could. Now it seems to be to make it as tortuous and jagged as possible. I think Miss Didion would have done better, to borrow a phrase, to have played her story as it lay, and not to have undermined it with accounts of the unreliability of narrative.

WITH its deconstructionists in liter-

ary criticism, its ordinary-language and other philosophers, and its novelists, our age may one day come to be known in intellectual history for its role in the advancement of techniques to prove that reality doesn't exist. Along with their natural gifts of dark temperament, our Sunshine Girls, Renata Adler and Joan Didion, are joined in this enterprise. It is more than a mite depressing.

In search of comic relief while reading the novels of Miss Adler and Miss Didion, I happened upon Nietzsche's little book *Schopenhauer as Educator*—one must take one's laughs where one can find them—where I came upon the following remarkable explanation of why such novels, and the general train of thought they represent, are so depressing:

Basically, you see, cheerfulness is only to be found where there is victory, and this applies to the works of all true thinkers as it does to every work of art. Even if the content is terrible and serious as the problem of existence itself, the work will have an oppressive and painful effect only in those cases where the half-thinker or half-artist has spread the haze of his inadequacy over it; whereas nothing better or more cheering can happen to a man than to be near those victorious persons who, because they have thought the deepest thoughts, must love what is most alive, and finally, like the wise men they are, turn to the Beautiful. They really *talk*, they don't stammer or gossip; they really live and move, unlike other human beings who lead such a strange mask-like existence. For this reason when we are near them we feel, for a change, human and natural and have an urge to shout out as Goethe: "How marvelous and precious is a living thing! how real and truly adapted to its condition!"

Recall that Nietzsche is here talking about Schopenhauer, the darkest of all modern philosophers. There is plain pessimism and there is heroic pessimism—and of plain pessimism, of the kind Renata Adler and Joan Didion dispense, we have had quite enough. Let, please, the sun shine in.

## Books in Review

### Sex and Society

THE BOURGEOIS EXPERIENCE: VICTORIA TO FREUD. VOLUME I: EDUCATION OF THE SENSES. By PETER GAY. Oxford University Press. 534 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by PAUL JOHNSON

WE are promised that this is the first installment of "a project of enormous scope," a "multivolume study of the European and American middle classes from the 1820's to the outbreak of World War I." Actually, it is an extensive but not particularly systematic survey of sexuality in the 19th century. Peter Gay is an ambitious and unusually wide-ranging historian of culture, and no one can fail to admire the industry with which he seeks knowledge and his zest in communicating it. Peering behind the formal 19th-century attitudes to sex, he has not only read the relevant secondary authorities, and ranged very widely in the published diaries and memoirs in English, French, and German, he has also tapped the rich sources of unpublished letters and diaries deposited in American libraries. He has come up with some real plums, too, notably what he calls the "exhaustive record" which Mabel Loomis Todd, a middle-class girl who grew up in Washington, D.C. in the 1860's and was later to become the wife of an Amherst astronomer and the woman responsible for bringing Emily Dickinson's poetry before the reading public, kept of her "erotic life."\* Professor Gay has an engaging manner and a sharp eye for a telling quotation and a choice example. Even experienced students of the period will find plenty here that is new and interesting.

Nevertheless, at bottom this book is a lot of miscellaneous information chasing a subject. It lacks a pervasive theme and a solid shape.

PAUL JOHNSON, formerly editor of the New Statesman, is the author of *Modern Times*, among other books.

The title of the larger project, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, gives the game away. Let us take the three elements in turn: "Victoria," "Freud," "Bourgeois."

I am coming to believe that the term "Victorian," which was coined in its popular, pejorative sense by Bloomsbury intellectuals, ought to be avoided by historians, even in reference to English history. A change in tone toward religiosity and public decorum had set in long before Victoria came to the throne. Her personal impact was really limited to the period when she was under the influence of Prince Albert, that is, from the early 1840's to his death in 1861. From 1868 on, the first Gladstone government ended the Victorian consensus, if there ever was one; and the financial crisis and agricultural distress of the late 1870's introduced a new age of economic change and social strain.

In many ways Victoria herself was most un-"Victorian," with much wider sympathies than most of her subjects, and especially the official and ruling classes. For instance, she had warm feelings toward the Jews, dating from the days when she stayed as a child in Sir Moses Montefiore's house in Ramsgate. Also, as anyone who visits the most personal of her homes, Osborne, can see, she loved her Indian subjects, whose portraits and mementos clutter the house. The prime ministers she liked best, Melbourne and Disraeli, and the servants who won her confidence, John Brown and the Munchi, were all tremendously un-"Victorian" as well. Inside that round little body there was an impulsive radical struggling to get out, and sometimes succeeding. What she was not (as Gay claims) was a bourgeoisie: no bourgeoisie ever ate breakfast off solid gold.

Gay's use of Freud also seems to me misleading. Most of Freud's best work was done around the turn of the century, but his impact on the wider world outside Vienna did not begin until the end of World War I. Then, in due course, it was

seismic; but it is largely irrelevant in terms of Gay's period. Gay appears to be a more or less orthodox Freudian, and that is a disadvantage to a historian now that most of us have come to see Freud not as a scientist but as an imaginative writer, if an original and illuminating one. Gay is not so foolish as to buy the full psychobiography and psychohistory package, but I shudder when he tells us his purpose is "to integrate psychoanalysis with history." How would it sound if one said one's purpose was to integrate phrenology/table-turning/mesmerism with history?

Gay, indeed, is obsessed with Freud, who pops up in his text persistently and incongruously. We have Freud on the use of Latin, on John Stuart Mill, on the spread of contraception, on Malthus, on breast-feeding, and on many other matters. Thus, discussing Mary Wood-Allen's book on what to tell children about sex, Gay cannot help noting: "Sigmund Freud intensely disliked this kind of equivocation." Informing us that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had eight children in fourteen years, Gay feels bound to add: "The Freuds had six children in eight years."

BUT a more fundamental objection to Gay's framework is his use of the word "bourgeois" to characterize his period. He frequently refers to it as "the bourgeois century." The implication is that the dominant culture of the 19th century, in Europe and North America, was that of the urban business class. I believe this to be not so much a grotesque oversimplification as fundamentally invalid. Gay himself admits and dismisses at length problems of definition, conceding that some historians argue that the reality of bourgeois power in the 19th century has been much exaggerated. But after this

\* The correspondence of Mabel Loomis Todd and her lover Austin Dickinson (Emily's brother) has recently been published in a selection by Polly Longworth, *Austin and Mabel*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 449 pp., \$24.95.

genuflection, he hurries on to do what he had intended all along, ignoring the very substantial objections to his fundamental assumption.

But these objections cannot be ignored. The nearest approach to a bourgeois society before 1900 was the United States. Even there, the description is misleading. Until the 1860's, the South was very much a gentry society, as were for long after states like Texas, Wyoming, Colorado, and even parts of California. Parts of New England, up to 1900 and beyond, were highly stratified under the leadership of commercial dynasties which had perhaps more in common with the Medicis in Florence or the Moncenigos in Venice than with Dickens's Dombey or Veneerings. From the late 1870's, the United States was expanding with such astonishing speed, both geographically and demographically, and receiving such vast numbers of peasants, small tradesmen, craftsmen, and refugees from so

many quite different backgrounds, as to defy any kind of social-cultural classification. In due course, a cultural fix was imposed, and it was middle-class of a kind; but it came only in the 1920's when immigration began to slow down. One might say, indeed, that the true bourgeois age began in the United States only during World War I, and thereafter lasted until the late 1950's.

THE position in Europe was not so very different. Up to the fall of the Kaiser in 1918, Prussian Germany was ruled by Junker landowners. The Liberals and even the Social Democrats might do well in elections but they never exercised real power. Even civilian ministers addressed the Reichstag in uniform; it is difficult to imagine anything less bourgeois than that. It was precisely because the dominant German culture was so deeply militaristic that the bourgeois Weimar republic proved so feeble and was so easily overthrown by the Nazis.

The Austrian empire was less homogeneous, but in all essentials court and aristocracy retained their power until the Hapsburgs left their throne: bourgeois politics was for local and occasionally regional government.

France was a more complex case. To begin with, it had four aristocracies: two Bourbon (*noblesse d'épée* and *noblesse de robe*), one Orleanist, one Napoleonic (itself divided into First and Second Empire titles). They were mutually exclusive with distinct cultural variations, not least on sexual mores. Broadly speaking, and with help from the Church and the high bourgeoisie, they governed France, except for brief intervals, until they lost effective long-term power during the struggles over the Dreyfus case in the decade from 1895 to 1905. There is something to be said for the view that the general election and Combes ministry of 1902 was the first time the French middle class took possession.

**THE SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY**  
JÓZEF TISCHNER  
Foreword by ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
Afterword by LECH WALESA

"Józef Tischner writes about things that still flow through the minds, and even more through the hearts, of my compatriots."  
—Lech Walesa  
Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

**THE SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY**  
by JÓZEF TISCHNER  
Translated by Marek B. Zaleski, M.D. and Benjamin Fiore, S.J. •  
Introduction by Zbigniew Brzezinski • Afterword by Lech Walesa

Published for the first time in English, this insider's account of the Polish Solidarity movement concisely explains the spirituality, philosophy, and social thinking of the most significant human rights movement of our time.

\$10.95  
At bookstores

HARPER & ROW  
SAN FRANCISCO  
\*suggested consumer price

Much the same is true of the British general election of 1906. Gay's notion of the "bourgeois century" does not fit the facts of 19th-century Britain. The Reform Bill of 1832 did not hand over power to the middle classes. The commercial interest might win victories, such as the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, but for at least a generation longer the gentry were dominant in Parliament. If we look at the cabinet Gladstone formed in 1880 after an overwhelming Liberal victory, what do we find? Of fourteen members, one was a duke, one a marquess, five were earls, and one of the commoners was of Plantagenet descent. Its Conservative successor in 1885 numbered one duke, one marquess, three earls, a viscount, and a baron; of eight commoners, three were the sons of dukes and three others were closely related to the nobility. Even the famous radical cabinet of December 1905 had (of nineteen members) a marquess, three earls, two barons, and five landowners.

Gay is often baffled by European class structures. He cites Gladstone constantly, referring to his "punitive evangelical superego" and his "bourgeois conscience." But Gladstone was not an evangelical but a High Anglican. Furthermore, although his family background was Scots-Liverpool commerce, his education was at Eton and Oxford, and his classical Anglican culture was that of the upper class; he married into one of the oldest landowning families in Wales, lived in a castle, and managed a large estate. He was a pillar of London society, and his diaries show he went on the usual summer-autumn round of country houses; when he dined alone at his club he drank an imperial pint of champagne like any other grandee.

FAR from the middle classes taking over society with their culture, it was the other way around until 1914. The single most striking phenomenon of 19th-century social culture was the cult of the gentleman, the engine of which was bourgeois emulation of upper-class behavior. As the novels of Trollope repeatedly demonstrate, the decisive question in mid-19th-century England was whether a man could plausibly

call himself a gentleman; that was the dividing line. The phenomenon was not confined to England or the English, as Henry James makes clear. Indeed it was everywhere. An immigrant like Karl Marx, sweating away in London at *Das Kapital* and so poor he was constantly in and out of the pawnshop, nevertheless forbade his daughters to work and kept them at home playing the piano and painting watercolors so that he could "prove" they were ladies.

Marx betrayed his confusions when, in the 1848 *Manifesto*, he and Engels referred to "the idiocy of rural life." The bourgeoisie no longer agreed with him on this point. By mid-century they were acquiring country houses, if they were successful enough, and so aspiring to gentry status and with it absorbing an aristocratic culture of a sort. Dickens's Mr. Dombey Senior was already old-fashioned, clinging to his grand merchant's house in the City. A generation later he would have been building in the country, like Galsworthy's Soames Forsyte. The essence of the bourgeois is that he is a city dweller. He changes his status, and culture, when he acquires broad acres.

Gay quotes Stendhal: "The bourgeois has replaced the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the bank is the aristocracy of the bourgeois class." But by the time Stendhal wrote, English banking families like the Coutts and the Carringtons (né Smith) were already in the aristocracy proper and reflecting its culture. The Rothschilds began to lose their bourgeois status when they left Frankfurt. By mid-century they were acquiring country palaces, like Ferrières-en-Brie, Mentmore, Tring, and Waddesdon. Their culture was that of the court, the great art dealers, the fashionable jewelers and carriage-makers, Ascot, and Vincennes. Their attitude to morals reflected ruling-class habits. At Waddesdon, for instance, I have seen a staircase built so that Victoria's heir, the Prince of Wales, could communicate with the bedroom of his current mistress when both were guests of the Rothschilds.

The Rothschilds were exceptional but not unique in their upward mobility. Gay quotes Heine as an

excoriator of bourgeois cultural values. But Heine's own family reflects the upward movement which confuses the line of class demarcation. One of his brothers became a baron; another married into the nobility and acquired a "*von*"; other members of the family became barons, duchesses, and princesses, and even a reigning prince of Monaco. The culture of many members of the Heine family was no more bourgeois than (in a different way) was Heine's own.

IN SHORT, the framework of Gay's book lacks accurate definition and, above all, chronological precision. Am I being pedantic? I don't think so. Gay's method of writing history makes large claims. It springs in part from the French *Annales* school of "total history" which, under its progenitor Marc Bloch, cast beams of light into remote corners of the Dark Ages but which, under Fernand Braudel and Le Roi Ladourie, and still more among their imitators, has been characterized by pretentiousness and flatulence. Its greatest weakness, issuing from the desire to avoid narrative and consequential argument at all costs, is the lack of a chronological framework. History without chronology tends to degenerate into fuzzy anecdote.

In his multivolume study of capitalism, Braudel habitually strings together snippets of evidence from different periods and widely disparate societies to prove a specific point. Gay follows this unsatisfactory method. Thus, to show that "death provided material for heartless humor" in the "culture" he says he is anatomizing, he cites evidence from 1826, 1859, and 1885, drawn from England, France, and Germany. Both the geographical and still more the chronological span are much too wide. After all, 1826 was the morrow of Byron's death, 1885 the eve of T.S. Eliot's birth. Or, to put it another way, 1826 saw the opening of the first commercial railroad, 1885 the first automobile. To have any useful meaning, a cultural generalization requires a much sharper focus than this: often, a decade is too long.

I stress the defects of Gay's methodology because the taxonomy and

presentation of evidence are even more critical than usual when the subject is as elusive as sexual behavior. Gay's book suggests that it is not possible, at any rate at present, to characterize 19th-century sexuality with any precision, and certainly not to give it a "bourgeois" label. American society, not surprisingly in view of its origins, had always set unprecedented standards of sexual propriety in public, and the 19th century brought no essential change, so far as one can see. In England, there was a marked improvement in court morals from the 1840's, and in upper-class morals, at any rate for public consumption. In both Britain and the United States, contemporaries agreed there was a falling off during and immediately after World War I.

But all this is commonplace knowledge. Gay's material shows there are exceptions to any and all generalizations. There are also great continuities. Byron went into exile in 1816 at least partly to avoid scandalous disclosures about his sexual habits. Oscar Wilde went to jail and exile in 1895. Thirty-five years later, Earl Beauchamp was forced into exile for exactly the same reason, thus providing Evelyn Waugh with his Lord Marchmain in *Brideshead Revisited*. As recently as the 1950's, one of my Oxford contemporaries, Lord Montague, was jailed for this kind of offense.

The big change, it seems to me, came in the 1960's, perhaps the biggest change in sexual mores in the whole history of the West. But even then some continuities remain. In 1886, Gladstone, compiling his cabinet list, felt obliged to write "unavailable" against Sir Charles Dilke's name because that enterprising baronet was already publicly associated with a salacious divorce action. Last autumn, Cecil Parkinson was forced to leave Mrs. Thatcher's cabinet when behavior in every way less reprehensible than Dilke's was publicly disclosed. Publicity is the criterion, as it nearly always has been. There seems to be a strong and continuing popular desire that homage should be paid to virtue in public, irrespective of what happens in private. And, *pace* Peter Gay, that is about the only generalization it is safe to make.

## From Troy to Saigon

THE MARCH OF FOLLY. By BARBARA W. TUCHMAN. Knopf. 448 pp. \$18.95.

Reviewed by DAVID GRESS

AT FIRST glance, a remarkable idea: to examine cases in world history in which rulers, to preserve their power or principles as they saw them, persisted in policies which damaged or destroyed that power. Barbara Tuchman defines such policies as "folly" if they meet three criteria: they "must have been perceived as counterproductive in [their] own time"; "a feasible alternative course of action must have been available"; and, finally, the policies must have been those "of a

DAVID GRESS is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution. His study of post-war German security and political culture, *Peace and Survival*, will be published later this year.

group, not an individual ruler, and should persist beyond any one political lifetime." She chooses four examples, one mythological, two from early modern Western history, and one contemporary.

The mythological example, presumably included as a sort of archetype of folly, "the prototype of all tales of human conflict," is the Trojans' taking of the Wooden Horse into their city. The horse, as we know, was full of armed Greeks, who emerged under cover of darkness and opened the gates to their fellows. In the myth, the Trojans had indeed been warned, but nevertheless collectively decided to bring in the horse.

The criterion of an available alternative course of action is, however, not fulfilled in this example, as it could not easily be in a mythological story. The message of most Greek myths is precisely that the tragic outcome is fated and that warning voices are not heeded; if they were, there would be no story.

In 1933, the Jewish leadership in Palestine faced a desperate dilemma: whether to trade the lives of Germany's Jews by ending a world-wide Jewish-led boycott of German goods. An agonizing choice, because the boycott could lead to the economic collapse of Hitler's Third Reich.

Edwin Black draws on hitherto-suppressed archives and reveals the dramatic details of these heart-rending negotiations. He exposes the conflicts that shattered the Jewish community then—and are still being debated today.

It may be history's ultimate irony that what was seen as a deal with the devil became a cornerstone in the foundation of the modern state of Israel.

**"These things have been hinted at before; now they have been exposed."**—Abraham Peck, American Jewish Archives

**"Captures the passion, veracity, exultation and, yes, naiveté of that moment in history."**—Morris Frommer, author of *The American Jewish Congress*

**"A spellbinding, exciting book."**—Dr. Sybil Milton, Simon Wiesenthal Center

**THE TRANSFER AGREEMENT**  
By EDWIN BLACK

MACMILLAN 448 pages / \$19.95

**The "deal with the devil" that saved 60,000 Jews from the Holocaust.**

**THE TRANSFER AGREEMENT**

Mrs. Tuchman's treatment of the ancient legend smacks of the rationalist prejudice typical of the less attractive side of the modern Enlightenment tradition. In her belief, "the gods (or God, for that matter) are a concept of the human mind." Thus, she finds it legitimate to judge the actions of the Trojans by modern utilitarian standards, and not in terms of the religious or the psychological world view to which they adhered. She is, in effect, blaming the Trojans for being characters of legend.

Now, historians are not obliged to be religious phenomenologists or comparative anthropologists. It is apparently not even considered odd today to set forth opinions on ancient matters without knowing Greek or Latin. A historian writing for the general reader, however, has a special obligation to respect the insights, knowledge, and methods of applicable disciplines, and this Mrs. Tuchman fails to do.

HER failure becomes the more obvious in her second example, namely, the "provocation" by the Renaissance papacy of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Her account of the actual goings-on at the court of the Borgia, the della Rovere, and the Medici popes is entertaining enough, though in my opinion Will Durant did this job better and without any of Mrs. Tuchman's occasionally sententious moralizing, as when she speaks of the "rampant greed and grab and uninhibited self-gratification" of the Renaissance princes of the Church. But the idea that the German revolt which broke out in the 1520's was caused chiefly by the worldly behavior of the popes in Rome is another simplistic dogma of the anti-Christian Enlightenment with which no serious historian, whatever his beliefs, would today agree.

The Reformation was the result of long-term social, political, and cultural changes, and was a process which affected those who remained loyal to Rome as well as the Protestants. Luther was motivated primarily by his own doubt of the value of sacramental religion, a doubt which coincided with the political rejection of the old medieval order by strong forces in Ger-

man society. The character of the hierarchy and the papacy of his time merely confirmed his beliefs, they did not shape them.

The folly of the Renaissance popes, in fact, provoked reform, not schism, which had other and deeper causes. That Luther and the hardliners of the Counter-Reformation—Pope Paul IV and his successors—between them destroyed the moderate forces represented by the Englishmen Thomas More and Reginald Pole does not invalidate the efforts of those forces. The destruction of the middle, especially by Paul IV, was indeed a much greater example of folly in Mrs. Tuchman's sense than the antics of Alexander VI and Leo X. More tragic, too, since it was the result of deliberately chosen strategy.

MRS. TUCHMAN's next example from early modern times is the British loss of America, the result of the stubborn folly of consecutive British governments. The flaw in her reading of *this* episode was pointed out by Theodore Draper in his review of Mrs. Tuchman's book in the *New Republic*:

The loss of the colonies was regarded as the certain cause of Britain's economic ruin and downfall as a great power. . . . The ultimate folly could have been avoided only if the British had agreed to give up effective power in advance, a policy which no British government could have adopted and survived. Fighting in what one believes to be a life-and-death matter deserves some other status than "folly."

This last remark by Draper is especially interesting in the light of his own opinions about the Vietnam war, the subject which forms Mrs. Tuchman's final example and to which she devotes the entire second half of her book. Though many people clearly believed that there were vital Western and American interests and principles at stake in Indochina, Mrs. Tuchman ridicules this notion, and Draper, despite his stated belief that it is not folly to fight for what one believes to be vital interests, applauds her for it:

Only in this segment was I convinced that her organizing con-

cept was fully warranted. Much harsher things could be said about this most stupid and ignominious war in American history; folly must surely be one of the kindest.

MRS. TUCHMAN's approach to the Vietnam war is clearly indicated by the title of her narrative, "America betrays herself in Vietnam." In this section of her book she clearly reveals herself to be not a historian but a partisan proponent of a particular ideological perspective on recent American and world history.

Mrs. Tuchman still believes what many took for granted before 1975, namely, that Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese Communists were primarily nationalist rebels fighting, first, the French colonial regime and, later, the corrupt puppets of American imperialism. She notes that Ho was saved by American air-drops during the Japanese occupation in 1944, but asserts that his refusal to cooperate with the U.S. after the war was due exclusively to the American failure to approach him and win over his "nationalist" movement from the Soviet Union and Mao. Her account of the crucial period of the 50's, when Ho was securing his regime in good Stalinist fashion, largely ignores Vietnamese affairs in favor of strident criticism of the American "belief" that "every movement bearing the label Communist represented a single conspiracy," a conspiracy which was in fact only "envisaged by a self-induced state of mind." Dean Acheson's remark, lucid in its prescience, that Ho was "the mortal enemy of native independence in Indochina" is regarded by Mrs. Tuchman as too stupid to merit comment. She reserves her shrillest vituperation for John Foster Dulles, Acheson's successor as Secretary of State, whom she calls a "bully," "combative," and an "extremist," despite the fact that he never sought to practice what he occasionally preached, namely, a counteroffensive against Soviet expansion.

Her account of the culmination and end of the war does not deviate an inch from the ideological guidelines of her title. Blinded by their "protective stupidity," Lyndon Johnson and his advisers insisted that the North was out to conquer

and not just to "exploit the disintegration of the South." The conduct of the war was marred by atrocities and arrogance, and above all by the irrational idea that the fall of South Vietnam would lead to "imaginary falling dominoes." If the lesson of this fruitless effort were only learned, laments Mrs. Tuchman in one of her many digs at the Reagan administration, perhaps we could avoid "imbecility in El Salvador."

ONE is embarrassed to have to remind Mrs. Tuchman (and Theodore Draper as well) that there is nothing imaginary about the Boat People, about the tragic situation of Cambodia, about the Communist occupation of Laos, about the Soviet naval forces in Cam Ranh Bay, about the strategic threat to the Philippines, about the whole ghastly deterioration of the possibilities of resistance to Soviet expansion in Southeast Asia, or indeed about the rampant isolationism and willful neglect of international realities which ever since 1975 has bedeviled, if not paralyzed, American foreign policy.

Mrs. Tuchman, of course, blames the U.S. for the brutality of the Vietnamese Communist regime, which at least she does not try to deny. In a throwaway line, she says that "perhaps the greatest folly was Hanoi's—to fight so steadfastly for thirty years for a cause that became a brutal tyranny when it was won." This is a truly grotesque notion—that what Hanoi achieved was in any way different from what Ho, Giap, and the others wanted all along. The American intervention merely delayed, it did not create, the Vietnamese gulag. Yet that Ho might have stood, from the beginning, for something other than a regional variant of American Left-liberalism is apparently an idea too complicated for this historian to grasp.

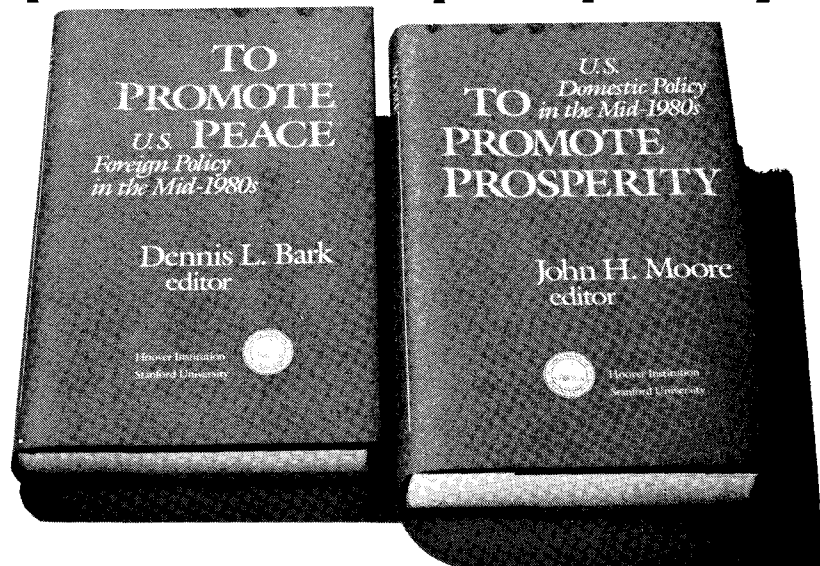
The real reason Mrs. Tuchman ascribes the cruelty of "the new political order in Vietnam" to American intervention is that to believe otherwise might lead to the dangerous conclusion "that the American attempt to prevent a Communist domination of the area was not without moral justification," to quote the final words of Guenter

Lewy's *America in Vietnam*. This conclusion threatens the legitimacy of Mrs. Tuchman's most cherished assumptions. It implies that there was a point to the effort, however ill-conceived or badly executed it was. It further implies that there was at one time a consistency to American foreign policy, a consistency shattered by the successes on the domestic political scene of peo-

ple with Mrs. Tuchman's own ideological views.

"Who since Vietnam would venture to say of America in simple belief that she was the 'last best hope of earth'?" asks Mrs. Tuchman sarcastically toward the end of her story. If the answer is "no one," it is not for the reasons she might suppose. The Vietnam war may have been

## To build an era of peace and prosperity.



### TO PROMOTE PEACE

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MID-1980S  
Edited by Dennis L. Bark

These challenging and incisive essays furnish a realistic analysis of the prospects for peace in a world torn between freedom and totalitarianism. From recommendations for a reduction of U.S. forces in Europe and a respected, sophisticated intelligence service as the foundation for peace to well-balanced forecasts of what the future holds in areas of strategic importance—the Middle East, the Pacific Basin, the Americas—this collection furnishes fresh ideas and innovative policy approaches at every turn. Contributors include Arnold Beichman, Robert Conquest, Melvyn Krauss, and Edward Teller.

Cloth, \$19.95 0-8179-7941-7

### TO PROMOTE PROSPERITY

U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY IN THE MID-1980S  
Edited by John H. Moore

Tough-minded and candid, these essays provide a rich amalgam of criticism of current policies and prescriptions for prosperity in today's intricate world. Beginning with recommendations for the addition of an Economic Bill of Rights to the Constitution and a possible end to the Federal Reserve's power to create money, and extending to an analysis of the Social Security system that challenges official forecasts, the hardheaded thinking in these essays is essential to longlasting prosperity. Among the contributors: Martin Anderson, Milton Friedman, Sidney Hook, and Rita Ricardo-Campbell.

Cloth, \$19.95 0-8179-7951-4

## Hoover Institution Press

STANFORD UNIVERSITY □ DEPT. 8160 □ STANFORD, CA 94305

To order, call:  
1-800-227-1991  
inside California:  
(415) 497-3373

an example of folly. Much greater is the folly of those who, like Mrs. Tuchman, still refuse to understand either its course, its outcome, or the full lessons to be learned from it.

Mrs. Tuchman's judgments of current American policy can be deduced with depressing ease from passing remarks in her narrative. As I have noted, she assumes as a matter of course that the Reagan administration's Central America policy is a case of "imbecility." She informs us that "the superpowers can and should divest themselves of the means of mutual destruction" since nuclear war is becoming more likely and will result in "human suicide." She asserts that the U.S. is seeking nuclear superiority and that this is the primary cause and source of East-West tension. Government under Reagan is characterized by "accelerating incompetence." The foolish "insistence" on economic growth is "demonstrably using up the basics of life on our planet." Such outdated clichés, presented without a shred of evidence, populate her pages.

They also give a clue to her popularity. Mrs. Tuchman's writings pander to the pseudo-sophistication of the new "yuppie" class, products of the chaotic and collapsing college education of the 70's. She does not remedy her readers' lack of historical or political knowledge by introducing them to past ideas and events. Instead, she interprets, or rather misrepresents, certain important junctures of world history in such a way as to confirm their suspicions and prejudices. The principles of power and political realism are already held in dishonor in America; a book purporting to show, with superficial arguments, that major confrontations of the past have been due merely to "folly" and not to much deeper and fundamental oppositions, merely contributes to the general decadence.

MRS. TUCHMAN asks, in conclusion, "whether . . . a country can protect itself from protective stupidity." This is indeed a relevant question. But the real question her work raises is whether the refusal to learn from history and the rejection

of experience and realism by the liberal intellectual establishment are not themselves the prime examples of protective stupidity in our time.

### Vanished Worlds

THE JEWS OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS. By EZRA MENDELSON. *Indiana*. 300 pp. \$27.50.

FROM A RUINED GARDEN: THE MEMORIAL BOOKS OF POLISH JEWRY. Edited and Translated by JACK KUGELMASS and JONATHAN BOYARIN. *Schocken*. 275 pp. \$18.95.

Reviewed by MAURICE FRIEDBERG

EZRA MENDELSON's new study is a solid, intelligent analysis of a Jewish community which, on the eve of World War II, was the largest and most heterogeneous of any in the world.

The longest chapter in the book is quite rightly devoted to Poland, whose more than three million Jews accounted for 10 percent of the country's population. Between the wars, Poland's Jews formed a highly variegated community. Though the bulk of them still spoke Yiddish, Polish was making rapid inroads among the young, and a Polish-Jewish press was in the process of developing. Cultural institutions were also growing in importance and influence. Along with widespread linguistic acculturation, there was also some outright assimilation, to the point of actual conversion to Christianity.

Economically, Poland's Jews spanned the entire range from the most destitute (of whom there were significant numbers) to the haute bourgeoisie, with the large majority in between made up of poor workers, artisans, and shopkeepers. With respect to education, too, Polish Jews ran the gamut from semi-illiterates to university-educated members of the free professions (though the latter were by and large

barred from government service). Politically, the spectrum extended from the ultra-Orthodox religious parties that favored collaboration with the government through the full complement of Zionist movements of varying ideological hues to the anti-Zionist Jewish Labor Bund and the (illegal) Communist party.

But whether they were assimilated or Yiddish-speaking, religious or free-thinking, Zionists or Polish patriots, Poland's Jews during the interwar period had one thing in common. They were all victims of anti-Semitic discrimination openly practiced by the authorities:

Jewish doctors were not hired in state hospitals, and Jewish lawyers were not employed by state institutions. Jewish professors in Polish universities were virtually unknown; even the great historian Szymon Askenazy, one of Poland's most distinguished scholars, could not obtain a chair in Warsaw. There were hardly any Jewish officers (aside from doctors) in the Polish army. The number of Jewish students in Polish universities, which were here as elsewhere in Eastern Europe hotbeds of anti-Semitism, declined dramatically during the interwar years—from 24.6 percent in 1921-22 to 8.2 percent in 1938-39.

Nor was it only in the elite sectors of society that Jews were discriminated against. Of Poland's 16,840 postal employees, a total of 21 were Jews, and of the 28,895 persons in the railroad system, Jews numbered 44.

Economic warfare against Poland's Jews was not random, but a matter of government policy. In a slogan that later became famous, Prime Minister Slawoj-Skladkowski said in 1936, "Economic struggle [against the Jews], by all means—but without force." Yet the official warning against violence often went unheeded: "[D]uring 1935-36," Mendelson writes, "1,289 Jews were wounded in anti-Semitic attacks in over 150 towns and villages in Poland, a number based on reports in the Polish press and probably much too low."

With all this, however, prewar Poland retained its status as the world's leading center of Jewish culture and scholarship, whether

MAURICE FRIEDBERG is professor of Russian literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana, and the author of *A Decade of Euphoria: Western Literature in Post-Stalin Russia, among other works*.

religious or secular. As Mendelsohn aptly puts it, Poland may have been bad for the Jews, but it was definitely good for Judaism (the opposite was true of the USSR during the 1920's).

BAD as Poland was, however, it is Rumania that had the dubious distinction of being (along with Imperial Russia) Europe's most anti-Semitic country both prior to World War I and during the inter-war period. In Rumania, traditional religious and economic grievances were reinforced by strong nationalist sentiments. In contrast to truncated Hungary, Rumania emerged from World War I with a territory and a population far greater than it had had in 1913. It so happened that many of the ex-Hungarian Jews now within Rumania's borders still retained their strong Magyar ties and an attachment to the Hungarian language, even as the Jews of Czernowitz retained their German cultural orientation, and those of the Eastern border areas gravitated linguistically and culturally to Russia.

On account of these circumstances, relations between Rumania's Jews and their Gentile compatriots ranged from distant to actively hostile. According to Mendelsohn, "[t]he overwhelming majority of Rumanian Jews felt very much apart from the ruling ethnic groups," so that, in contrast to the situation in Hungary and the Czech lands, intermarriage and/or conversion were very unusual. In addition, the Rumanian Orthodox Church was anti-Semitic in the extreme, as was, of course, the Iron Guard, Rumania's homegrown fascist movement which grew stronger as World War II approached and in the 1940's embarked on a Nazi-style campaign of systematic extermination of Jews.

Unlike the case in Poland and Rumania, Hungary's Jews prior to World War I regarded themselves as Magyars, and, more importantly, tended to be accepted as such by their Gentile neighbors and by Hungary's political establishment. This was true even of those who still clung to religious Orthodoxy (to say nothing of the modernist "Neologs").

Hungary's Jewish community was in many ways reminiscent of its counterparts in Germany and France. Eschewing purely Jewish political activity, whether of the Zionist or Bundist type, the majority of Hungary's Jews participated in Hungarian political life, fought in Hungary's wars, and used the Hungarian language exclusively. Economically prosperous, on excellent terms with the landed gentry, and largely ignored by the peasants as well as the Catholic and Calvinist churches, Hungary's Jews were among Europe's most privileged.

Nevertheless, in the wake of Hungary's defeat and subsequent partitioning after World War I, and following the demise of the short-lived Communist regime of Béla Kun in 1919 (which was widely regarded as a Jewish conspiracy), the status of Hungarian Jews began to deteriorate rapidly, to the point where a reign of physical terror was unleashed against them.

According to Mendelsohn, the one country which, "from a Jewish point of view," provided the most favorable environment in Eastern Europe was Czechoslovakia. This was so despite the fact that the Jews living in Bohemia and Moravia gravitated linguistically and culturally toward Germany, and that their economic position was not very different from that of the more prosperous Jews of Hungary, whom they also resembled in their high level of acculturation and rather lax religious observance (the rate of intermarriage exceeded 30 percent, which was considered a very high figure for the period).

There are a number of reasons why, in Mendelsohn's words, "Czech politics on the whole remained relatively free of anti-Semitism." For one thing, Czech politicians "made great efforts to gain backing for their national causes," and hence were careful not to alienate the Jews. But the decisive fac-

## At last, an eyewitness unmasks the real Klaus Barbie-U.S. link

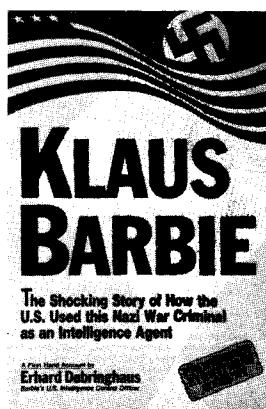
### The U.S.: more afraid of Communists than Nazis?

In 1948 Major Dabringhaus was a member of the U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps in Germany. Here he worked with Klaus Barbie for nearly a year as head of an information network on Communist activities. At first, he didn't realize who Barbie was. But his commanding officer did.

**KLAUS BARBIE**  
unmasks all the sordid details

Read the truth for yourself.

\$13.95  
hardcover at  
booksellers.



### Why the U.S. apologized to France and should apologize to the world

In this frank expose, learn how the U.S. paid Barbie \$1,700 a month, hid him from French intelligence agents, and finally sneaked him out of Europe through the Rat Line. What's more—the Butcher of Lyons (*wanted for sending 7,000 French Jews to death camps*) was not the only Nazi the U.S. nurtured.

CALL TOLL FREE 800-621-5199 any time  
(Il. res., 800-972-5188), or

### MAIL TODAY

☐ Send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of **KLAUS BARBIE** by E. Dabringhaus @ \$13.95 + \$1.50 post. & handling = \$15.45 ea.

☐ My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

☐ Charge my ☐ AE ☐ VISA ☐ MC

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable and mail to:

**ACROPOLIS BOOKS LTD.**  
2400 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009



# The JEWS of VIENNA

**Assimilation and Identity  
1867-1914**

**MARSHA L. ROZENBLIT**

Ablaze with excitement, effervescent with creativity—late-nineteenth-century Vienna was the ideal site for this analysis of the ways in which a sizeable and significant group of Jews was assimilated into European society. This book recreates their world, showing how they lived and successfully transformed old, identifiably Jewish patterns of behavior into modern urban variations, without abandoning their ethnic identity in the process. 368 pp. \$12.95 paper.

A volume in the SUNY Series in  
**MODERN JEWISH HISTORY**  
Paula E. Hyman, Deborah Dash Moore, Eds.

TO ORDER, send check or  
VISA/MasterCard info to **STATE  
UNIVERSITY of NEW YORK PRESS**,  
State University Plaza, Albany, NY  
12246. Add \$2 for postage/handling.

**State University of  
New York Press**



## Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals

Power, Knowledge, and Charisma

Michael Keren

Working with newly opened Israeli archives, Michael Keren analyzes the bitter conflict that developed in the 1960s between David Ben-Gurion and Israel's leading intellectuals, who had earlier been the close allies of the "philosopher-king" in the monumental effort of nation building. In so doing, Keren offers striking insights into the personalities and ideas that have shaped the state of Israel.

220 pages \$20.00  
ISBN 0-87580-094-7



Northern Illinois University Press  
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

tors appear to have been political idealism and genuine democratic convictions. Thomas Masaryk, the founding father of modern Czechoslovakia, was not only a proponent of complete Jewish equality within his country, but also a consistent advocate of the Zionist cause.

Perhaps the boldest thesis advanced by Mendelsohn in this book is that throughout the pre-Hitler period and beyond, "the strength or weakness of anti-Semitism [was] not related to the degree of acculturation or assimilation of the Jewry in question." Assimilated Hungarian Jews had to contend with strong anti-Jewish prejudice, while in Lithuania, where the Jews were least acculturated (few Jews, in fact, even understood the Lithuanian language), relatively benign conditions prevailed. Nor did the intensity of anti-Semitism appear to be significantly affected by the economic position of the Jewish community, its relative numerical size, its degree of religious observance, or its Zionist orientation or lack of one. Jewish politics, too, ultimately proved irrelevant. In Poland, where Jewish political life was most highly developed, the Jewish Labor Bund could not enlist the help of its socialist allies, who failed to come to the rescue of the Jews during the war. Nor were the Zionists any more effective: all their international connections notwithstanding, they proved unable to persuade the British to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish refugees attempting to escape.

Ironically, a higher percentage of Jews survived the Hitler era in the more anti-Semitic countries of Rumania and Hungary than in Poland and Czechoslovakia, apparently because "native" fascists in the first two countries were less doctrinaire and less efficient (and more corrupt) when it came to murdering Jews than the sincere and "idealistic" Nazis who occupied the other lands. Curiously, in one of the few lapses in his admirable study, Mendelsohn underestimates the importance of this paradox.

ONE outcome of the devastation of World War II has been the effort by Jewish survivors of the Holo-

caust to memorialize their old towns and villages. To this end, they have gathered together photographs, eyewitness accounts, and other memorabilia that may somehow preserve for posterity what would otherwise go unrecorded. These memorial books (in Yiddish, *yizker-bikher*, a term inevitably associated with religious services for the dead) comprise a relatively new genre of written folklore, one which relies primarily on the accuracy of human memory. This is not the work of scholarly historians, economists, or sociologists, but first-person narratives, often by uneducated and "naive" informants, attempting to recreate the day-to-day existence of their prewar communities.

In *From a Ruined Garden* Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, two anthropologists associated with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, have now brought together material from some sixty such memorial books, selected from a larger group of several hundred devoted to Poland's Jewish communities alone. Skillfully organized and translated, the book provides the English reader with an opportunity to sample the contents of these otherwise inaccessible sources, written, as they were, mainly in Hebrew and Yiddish.

These are no sentimentalized tales of the kind made famous by *Fiddler on the Roof*. Rather, they are matter-of-fact descriptions of Jewish institutions ranging from girls' religious schools to burial societies, and a portrait gallery of such familiar types as the village fool and the town beggar, as well as assortments of Jewish peddlers, stevedores, porters, and the like. Nor is the advent of modernity overlooked. There are accounts of newly formed Jewish sports clubs, self-defense leagues, and societies of political radicals challenging the traditional establishment. Yet its very matter-of-factness, the way it takes for granted a world now irrevocably shattered, is what makes this material so poignant. The book is altogether a most welcome addition to the still modest library of sources devoted to Jewish life in Eastern Europe and, indeed, to East European history generally.

## The Catastrophists

WHY ARE THEY LYING TO OUR CHILDREN? By HERBERT I. LONDON. Foreword by HERMAN KAHN. Stein & Day. 197 pp. \$15.95.

Reviewed by PETER SHAW

THE dogmas of the 1960's counterculture have not stood up well either to logic or to experience. Yet for certain intellectuals and educators, nothing better demonstrates the value of an idea than its discrediting. In this they are hardly alone; indeed, it is amazing how many of the discredited ideas of the 60's are enjoying a prolonged after-life. Thus, political analysts can point to the posthumous triumphs of McGovernism and Carterism long after their repudiations by the electorate. Literary critics, both inside and outside the academic world, know that in their field the contempt for the professional establishment that emerged and was (apparently) beaten back in the late 60's eventually metamorphosed into a respectable counter-dogma within the profession itself. As for history, the crudest attempts of the 60's to demonize America and the West have ended up being installed as received wisdom in American textbooks.

Some years ago an article in the *American Historical Review*, titled "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book," exposed the faulty scholarly basis for claims that America around the turn of this century had emerged as a jingoist, racist, imperialist, oppressor nation. The article then pointed out that this false picture had nevertheless made its way into the standard textbooks, and thence into the classroom. Another study, *How the Cold War Is Taught: Six American History Textbooks* (1978), by Martin F. Herz, detailed the triumph of similarly discredited ideas about America's responsibility for the cold war. Now Herbert London, who has previously written on contemporary culture and American

PETER SHAW is the author of *The Character of John Adams and American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution*.

education, offers still another valuable discussion in *Why Are They Lying to Our Children?* His subject is the future of the earth as it is viewed in high-school textbooks.

According to the sixty-eight textbooks London has surveyed, the most likely future is one in which natural resources will be depleted, and the air and water thoroughly polluted. Overpopulation promises to lead to mass starvation, and a growing gap between rich nations and poor holds out the threat of worldwide revolution. One text, under a typically misleading heading, "Toward a Better World," sums up the general message:

You may have read about "four giant horsemen" galloping across the face of the earth. One stands for Famine, the second for Disease, the third for War, and the fourth for Death. Today these "four giant horsemen" are galloping more swiftly than ever before. Some people say it may already be too late to slow them down. But many, many others still do not see the danger.

Predictions like these are based on projections of current trends. Since, as London points out, the trends have been misrepresented, the entire scenario rests on error. And of course it is tendentious error, calculated to dismay; London describes having had to reassure his own children about the future after they had been exposed to the reigning catastrophism in school. For other parents faced with the same problem, his book will provide useful ammunition for refuting promiscuous predictions of doom.

Where, for instance, textbooks teach that energy prices are rising, natural resources and farmland are disappearing, and starvation is increasing, the facts are that the amount of food per person in the world has been on the rise, as has the world's total amount of farmland. Life expectancy is growing substantially, and at the quickest rate in the poorest countries. Known reserves of minerals have increased and continue to increase, while the prices of minerals decline steadily. Air and water pollution have been reduced substantially. And so forth.

The typical textbook of today was

## THE WAR FOR LEBANON 1970-1983



By ITAMAR RABINOVICH, head of the Dayan Center and the Shiloah Institute for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. "An Israeli scholar's short, tight, dispassionate explanation-and-analysis of warring Lebanon.... Unequaled as a skeleton key—for close readers, at least."—*Kirkus Reviews*. "Perceptive, informed, and objective. Rabinovich seeks only to understand and thus explain, not to praise or condemn. An especially cogent analysis."—L. Carl Brown, Director, Near Eastern Studies Department, Princeton University. With 4 maps. \$19.95

Also of interest...

## THE BREZHNEV POLITBURO AND THE DECLINE OF DETENTE

By HARRY GELMAN. Focusing on the rise and fall of Soviet-American detente, Gelman's important and timely book clarifies the motivations, assumptions, and strategies behind Soviet foreign policy under Brezhnev and his successors. \$12.95 paper; \$29.95 cloth

Forthcoming in July...

## THE ILLOGIC OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR STRATEGY

By ROBERT JERVIS. The author provides a searing critique of current American nuclear policy, arguing against counterforce as a viable strategy for deterrence. (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs) \$19.95

At bookstores or from  
**CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS**  
P.O. Box 250, Ithaca, New York 14851

issued between 1977 and 1980, and thus incorporates the received wisdom of the 60's and early 70's as it took form in such books as the Club of Rome's 1972 report, *The Limits of Growth*, and *Ecotactics: The Sierra Club Handbook for Environmental Activists* (1970). The fact that such works were challenged as soon as they appeared (see, for example, "Growth and Its Enemies" by Rudolf Klein, COMMENTARY, June 1972), and that the Club of Rome report in particular had to be revised on account of inaccuracy within two years of its appearance, did not prevent them from influencing such interim predictions of doom as *An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect* (1974) by Robert Heilbroner and later *The Global 2000 Report to the President* (1980). The textbooks surveyed by London employ the most pessimistic figures available from these books, always preferring the Club of Rome report in its unrevised form.

It should be conceded that most of the texts in question are surveys of world and American history, so that the pages dealing with the environment and its future are relatively brief. My own son's high-school history text, which happens to be included in London's list, devotes only its final twelve pages to the future. Still, there is no mistaking what that future holds in store: "Underdevelopment and Overpopulation"; "Science and Technology: A Mixed Blessing"; and "Violence and Alienation." Moreover, while my son's class may not reach the section on futurology by the end of the school term, the attitudes embodied there can be found elsewhere in the book and in the curriculum.

LONDON's analysis points to the need for an imminent revision of textbooks, and along with them, it is to be hoped, the even more tendentious teachers' manuals. But the ideas of the 60's have taken hold at a deeper level than reason can touch. As London himself makes clear, to a certain kind of mind the vision of an improving future can appear no less menacing than that of a declining one. For most textbook authors, industrial develop-

ment and rising standards of living are at best "mixed blessings." "The green revolution," one textbook has it, "promised to relieve the threat of widespread famine; its need for chemical fertilizer threatened the environment." Moreover, industrialization and economic growth end by robbing poor people of their indigenous cultures. Whatever the facts that textbook authors might be forced to agree upon, then, the West in general and the United States in particular are slated to remain the villains.

The younger generation of teachers educated in the 1970's is not likely to be soon converted from its generally disparaging view of the Western world. Civilization itself hardly finds a good word in their classrooms, unless the subject is pre-Muslim Africa or pre-Columbian America—as it often is. At best, then, changes of attitude in textbooks and teaching lie far in the future. In the meantime, parents are faced with the responsibility of becoming knowledgeable about what their children are being taught. Parents who are not satisfied are now in a position to arm themselves with London's facts and figures, and to demand at least that the other side of the argument be presented alongside that of textbook author or teacher.

London himself would have education foster optimism about America and the future, for he believes that confidence is an essential ingredient in building a successful nation. For the time being, however, the most that can be looked for from educators is a greater respect for facts. For inspiration our children will have to look elsewhere.

### Popular & Other Fronts

THE HEYDAY OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM. By HARVEY KLEHR. *Basic Books*. 528 pp. \$26.50.

Reviewed by ERIC M. BREINDEL

THIS outstanding study of the American Communist movement during the Depression era

ERIC M. BREINDEL is a correspondent for a PBS national television program.

fills an important gap. Theodore Draper's two-volume history of American Communism took the party from its founding after the Bolshevik Revolution through the 1920's; David Shannon, Maurice Isserman, and Joseph Starobin have covered the years from World War II through, roughly, 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev "revealed" the monstrous crimes of Stalin and Stalinism and thereby produced the tidal wave of defections which transformed the party into a minor sect. Only the Depression era, truly the "heyday" of American Communism, though sketchily covered in Irving Howe and Lewis Coser's *The American Communist Party*, has remained without full scholarly treatment.

There are, of course, the party-sanctioned histories, written for example by the late William Z. Foster, the Communist presidential candidate in 1932 and Earl Browder's predecessor as leader of the party. Such works, informed by the Orwellian inversions characteristic of official histories published in the Soviet Union, are useful largely as chronologies and indexes—provided that one is not seeking information about anyone transformed into an "unperson." And there are also memoirs by Communists and former Communists, some considerably more honest and informative than others.

Klehr makes use of all these and similar works. But as sources they are insignificant by comparison with the material he obtained from the FBI and other government agencies (under the Freedom of Information Act); with the numerous collections of private papers and oral histories he was able to consult, around the country; and with the interviews he himself conducted. All in all, Klehr's book and his research represent an archival gold mine for future scholars.

But this is not simply a work for scholars. It is a valuable assessment for the general reader of American Communism during its most influential period; and it is also a lesson in the tactics and orientation of the most disciplined element on the radical Left.

Klehr goes to the heart of the matter right at the start, writing in his preface: "In all periods of party

history, the ultimate source of party policy was the Soviet Union. Even when the party's tracks are clear and seemingly autonomous, one must search for their Soviet sources." This rather straightforward proposition may seem self-evident, and not altogether profound. But there has been and still is a concerted effort by Left-oriented historians and memoirists to focus on the ostensibly *American* roots of domestic Communism, and thus to continue to hold aloft the old Browder slogan, "Communism is 20th-century Americanism." As Browder himself wrote in 1957 (well after his expulsion from the party), "What I miss in [Theodore] Draper is the understanding that he is writing about an organic part of *American* history, and not merely a study of the American section of the Communist International." Klehr's point is thus particularly crucial. Wisely, he never forgets whence—and why—the orders came. And he offers proof, in the form of actual cables, to document his case.

As for the impact of Communism in America: during the "Third Period" (from about 1928 to 1935), it was virtually nil. One reason is that in that period, Communists identified themselves as Communists. William Z. Foster, who wrote a book called *Towards Soviet America*, captured about 100,000 votes when he ran for President in the 1932 general election, one-ninth the total of the Socialist candidate, Norman Thomas. At that time, according to the Communists, Thomas himself, like FDR, was a "social fascist." In Europe, the Communists explained, Hitler's ascendancy to the chancellorship in 1933 was a passing phase, a mere prelude to proletarian revolution and the rise to power of the party (under the leadership, presumably, of Ernst Thälmann, languishing at that juncture in a new institution called Buchenwald). The "Third Period" was also characterized by warfare against organized labor through "dual unionism"—that is, the creation of alternative, Communist-dominated unions in industries already unionized—and by the "united front from below," an effort to persuade rank-and-file work-

ers to repudiate their own leadership in favor of that of the Communists.

But then, after the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in 1935, as Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov traveled across Europe in quest of collective-security pacts, the "Popular Front" became the order of the day. Communists now called themselves "liberals in a hurry." Hitler was no longer a passing phase. And political distinctions that had once been crucial were now deliberately blurred for the sake of the collective struggle against fascism.

Klehr excels particularly in his analysis of the role played on the American scene by the party, and by the Communist movement in general, during this later period, which lasted until 1939. He notes that actual membership figures are relatively meaningless as a criterion for measuring the influence of the party. In 1937, for example, the party had about 75,000 members—a figure, incidentally, never exceeded (except briefly in 1939, before the Hitler-Stalin Pact) until 1944, the year Browder dissolved the party and created the Communist Political Association. But at the same time (1937), party-controlled blocs of workers in the Congress of Industrial Organizations totalled 650,000 members. And there were still another 600,000 to be found in "split" unions—locals, or full unions, under partial Communist control. These latter figures are considerably more significant.

Equally revealing is Klehr's treatment of the party's electoral strength. In 1932, the 100,000 votes cast in favor of the Foster-Ford ticket were, in fact, a fair measure of party electoral influence. But in the 1936 and 1938 federal elections, and in municipal races in 1937, the number of votes cast for Communist candidates tells only part of the story. Communist influence in statewide "third" parties—the American Labor party (ALP) in New York and the Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota, for example—has to be taken into account. In the 1937 New York City municipal elections, nearly half-a-million people voted on the ALP line.

"THERE WAS no demonstration in Managua on Good Friday. More than a hundred thousand Catholics did not gather in the streets to protest Sandanista oppression in general and persecution of the church in particular. No priests or bishops led the non-protest. In fact the entire non-event was reported only by ABC, CBS, NBC, AP, UPI, the New York Times, and the Washington Post ignored it, so it hardly happened."

For a free copy of the current issue of National Review write to Dept. C-5, 150 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.

### Richard Viguerie's new book **The Establishment vs. The People:**

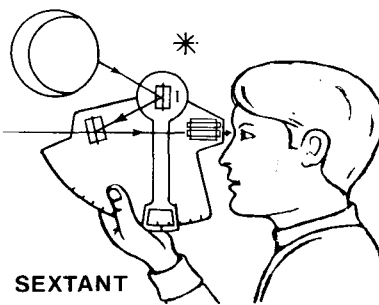
*"indispensable for those who would understand the future of American politics" (Lew Lehrman); "a useful way to start 1984 . . . an excellent analysis" (Cong. Newt Gingrich).*

\$12.95, from the American Populist Institute,  
7777 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22043.  
Also available at your local bookstore.

### STIMULATE INQUIRING, YOUNG MINDS...

with a THINGS membership. Kits mailed each month have materials to use, and a booklet giving background on the science subject and easy to follow instructions for exciting demonstrations and experiments.

Designed for young people 10 to 16, parents often enjoy them too!



SEXTANT

IDEAS FOR SCIENCE FAIRS-AN INTERESTING HOBBY-A HELP IN DECIDING ON A CAREER-A GIFT THAT'S FOR THE WHOLE YEAR:

JOIN NOW!

MAIL WITH REMITTANCE TO:

## THINGS of Science

RD 1, Box 130C  
Newtown, PA 18940

GIFT CARD SENT IF REQUESTED  
1 YEAR - \$17.50 2 YEARS - \$33.00  
EACH ADDITIONAL MEMBER - \$16.00  
CANADA AND MEXICO ADD \$6.50;  
OTHER COUNTRIES ADD \$9.00.

In addition to the realms of organized labor and electoral politics, Klehr treats what he calls "The Intellectual Merry-Go-Round," exploring (as has William L. O'Neill in *A Better World*\*) cultural life within the party itself, in party front organizations, and in the general ambit of American Communism. Here too, mere numbers offer not even a clue as to the degree of Communist influence on American intellectual life. Included as well in *The Heyday of American Communism* is a sociological analysis of the tens of thousands who drifted in and out of the party during the Depression years. Extending Nathan Glazer's treatment of this subject in *The Social Basis of American Communism*, Klehr demonstrates the predominance in the party of middle-class Jews and the foreign-born. Native, Gentile, blue-collar laborers were relatively rare.

Klehr puts paid to the claim, dear to Communists, ex-Communists, and sympathetic historians, that in the 30's the Communist party ad-

vanced the cause of FDR and the New Deal. In fact the party opposed Roosevelt at almost every turn, and only belatedly hitched its wagon to the rising star of this or that aspect of the New Deal. Although Klehr touches only briefly on the "underground party" and on espionage conducted in behalf of the Soviet Union during the period in question, he says enough to make it clear that to the committed Communist, the American national interest was, at best, a secondary concern.

KLEHR's achievement in *The Heyday of American Communism* makes one hope for similarly distinguished studies of the other period remaining to be explored, that running from 1956 to the present. American Communism and American Communists did not simply evaporate after 1956, destroyed by Khrushchev's secret speech and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Many Communists, still essentially loyal to the creed, found the party too heavily

stigmatized—and, not unimportantly, too deeply infiltrated by the FBI—to serve as an effective political vehicle. They transferred their political energies and organizational talents—as well as their (once again hidden) political agenda—into creating or dominating new organizations, some of which, like Women Strike for Peace, became both noteworthy and influential during the war in Vietnam. Indeed, some such groups, and still newer ones, remain significant even today: the U.S. Peace Council, and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), are familiar contemporary manifestations of the phenomenon—straight out of the tradition traced by Klehr—of genuine "fronts." No doubt this contemporary American movement will one day find a scholar both talented and thorough enough to penetrate its various disguises.

---

\* See my review in COMMENTARY, March 1983.



# QUICK. WHOSE SIDE ARE WE ON?

Central America is very complex. So are most news stories.

That's why you should watch The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour every weeknight. News stories get the time they deserve.

The time *you* deserve.

You get more facts about a story. You get different sides. And you get the analysis you need to understand completely.

Major funding for The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour is provided by AT&T, the national corporate underwriter.

**The MacNeil/Lehrer  
NEWSHOUR**  
Weeknights on PBS



Produced by WNET/13, N.Y., WETA, Wash., DC., and MacNeil-Lehrer-Gannett Prod. Funded by AT&T, Public Television Stations, and CPB. © AT&T 1984

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



#### Consumer Orientation

No. 28 in a series  
of technical papers.

**Subject:** Evolution  
of a Classic.

# 28

# Porsche 911

From its inception, the Porsche 911 has been hailed as an extraordinary sports car. The design concept has proven amazingly resistant to aging and even after two decades remains virtually unchanged.

Porsche's commitment to long term values can best be seen in the continuing evolution of this legendary model. Throughout the years, technical design features have achieved state-of-the-art levels. New technologies and advanced lightweight materials have consistently found their way into the 911 much earlier and with greater impact than other automobiles. While the timeless 911 styling, aerodynamic contours, and superior performance have long dis-

tinguished it from all contenders.

The latest embodiment of this remarkable automobile is the new and even more powerful 3.2-liter Porsche 911 Carrera. The Carrera name has always been reserved for truly outstanding cars and this new model is certainly no exception.

From its sleek contours, to its DME-controlled fuel-injected engine, the 911 Carrera delivers improved performance through an application of knowledge gained from research and racing. At Porsche, excellence is expected. The Porsche 911 Carrera's price is \$31,950\*.

For your nearest Porsche Audi dealer, call toll-free 1-800-447-4700 within the continental U.S.

## Carrera



\*Mfr's sugg. retail price. Taxes, title, transp., registration, dealer delivery charges add'l.  
© 1984 Porsche Audi

**PORSCHE · AUDI**  
NOTHING EVEN COMES CLOSE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED